



**Investigation into the Microteaching Practices of Egyptian
Pre-service Teachers of English in an EFL Teacher Preparation
Programme: Implications for Curriculum Planning and Design**

Submitted by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Dad, Mum and my husband

Who greatly shaped my life and always dreamt to see me a PhD holder.

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ABSTRACT

Based on an interpretive paradigm, this study aimed at probing into the perceptions of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers of the new microteaching course. It investigated a) pre-service teachers and lecturers' perceptions about the course focuses; b) pre-service teachers' and lecturers' perceptions of the difficulties encountered during course application, and finally c) pre-service teachers' perceptions about the helpfulness of the microteaching course in enhancing their teaching performance during practicum. Moreover, the study aimed at utilising this investigation for developing a framework for microteaching curricula planning and design.

Data collection was based on a sequential mixed methods approach, thus in the first phase of the study, the researcher administered a questionnaire to 10 lecturers and 125 EFL pre-service teachers in the third year English department at the Faculty of Education of Menoufia University in Egypt. In Phase Two the researcher conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 7 lecturers and 15 pre-service teachers, who also completed a reflective journal. Data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the current study indicated that there are nineteen focuses of the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education. These focuses have been classified into three main themes: lesson planning skills, lesson implementation skills, and lesson evaluation skills. As revealed by data analysis, lecturers devoted less time to practising lesson evaluation skills.

Findings also revealed that EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers encountered the following difficulties during peer group work: modelling the skills, planning a micro-lesson, teaching a micro-lesson, and when giving and receiving feedback. Furthermore, it was found that the course was helpful in enhancing pre-service teachers' teaching performance at practicum concerning their professional skills rather than their personal qualities. Psychological, socio-cultural, and socio-political factors that affect the implementation of the microteaching course are discussed. Implications and suggestions for further research are provided.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| TEFL | Teaching English as a Foreign Language |
| MOHE | Ministry of Higher Education |
| NBPTS | National board for professional teaching standards |
| CDELT | Centre for the development of English Language Teaching |
| IELP-II | Integrated English Language Program |
| STEP | Standards for English programs teachers graduating from pre-service |
| HEEP | Higher Education Enhancement Programme |
| SPU | Strategic Planning Unit |
| BGTC | Borda General Teaching Competence |
| BERA | British Educational Research Association |

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

EFL teacher preparation programmes aim to graduate qualified teachers who are capable of efficaciously teaching language to their students. According to Richards (1996), EFL teacher education must provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to acquire effective teaching skills and competences that are used by effective teachers. Moreover, this kind of education should make a link between what is acknowledged in the field with what is accomplished in the classrooms Freeman(2002). In designing pre-service teacher training program, crucial decisions have to be made about the aim, structure and content of the program in addition to identifying the most appropriate ways of preparing pre-service teachers, and adequately support them in the classrooms(Darling-Hammond,2006).

Well prepared EFL teachers should be equipped with important areas of teacher competence to achieve the intended learning outcomes. According to Moore (2000), these areas include: theoretical knowledge about learning, attitudes and human relationships, subject matter knowledge, and technical teaching skills to facilitate the teaching learning process. Alatis (2009) clarifies that language teachers should receive diligent preparation as a result of the unique characteristics that distinguished the process of teaching and learning a foreign language. Schelfhout et al.(2006), adds that good quality teacher preparation programs should provide pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills about teaching and learning, prepare them to work in the schools, and help them to reflect on their teaching practices in an attempt to improve their discipline shortcomings. Liyanage and Bartlett (2008) believe that the more familiar pre-service teachers are with the teaching context: personal, physical, cultural, social, or institutional factors, around them, the greater they will be ready for their teaching profession.

In addition, language involves two key elements of human practice: thought and experience. It is organised in the mind and takes shape according to the social structures within which it is used. Language is thus not just a device to facilitate communication but also a mechanism of and for socialisation and reflection (Farenga & Ness, 2005). Microteaching is not just a course but also an activity that promotes a range of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competences. Pre-service teachers are thus historical and social actors in a cultural agenda of forming and reforming values, ideas and activities about language and its place in society (Bartletta, Erben, & Singha, 1996).

One important method of preparing pre-service teachers for their profession is microteaching. With its emphasis on actual teaching then analysing it to its components, microteaching is depicted as one of the important methods of enhancing teaching and equipping pre-service teachers with a basis for reflection and professional development (Akalın, 2003). Microteaching is a scaled down training technique where small groups of pre-service teachers observe each other's teaching, give and receive feedback, and actively participate in discussion to improve each other's teaching skills in a positive, learner-centred environment. According to I'Anson, Rodrigues et al. (2003), Kpanja (2001), and Klinzing (2005) microteaching has been shown to be an effective method for helping pre-service teachers learn how to teach effectively. Amobi (2005), Kupper (2001), and Metcalf (1993) add that research done to explore pre-service teachers' perspectives on microteaching indicated that they have found it useful for their preparation.

As part of a serious attempt to keep up with the recent educational movements all over the world to provide opportunities for its pre-service teachers to be able to master the necessary competences expected of them in their pre-service programme, and to enhance their teaching abilities, Shebin Elkom faculty of Education introduced a microteaching course in the Bachelor program in 2009. Being new, its focuses, difficulties and helpfulness in preparing 3rd year Egyptian pre-service teachers for their real practicum, require further exploration. Consequently, this research was conceptualised to investigate the present status of the microteaching course and its helpfulness in developing EFL pre-service teachers' performance in practicum. The research also proposes some possible

suggestions that might maximize pre-service teachers' benefit from studying such a course in the EFL pre-service teachers' preparation programme. If the expected aims of the research could be achieved, it would be beneficial to Menoufia University pre-service teachers in particular and to other Egyptian faculties of education pre-service teachers in general.

1.2 Rationale for conducting the research

Although pre-service teacher preparation is of great significance, some EFL pre-service teachers complain that they find their preparation programme inadequate for preparing them for their future career. (Christopher & Rigden, 2002) declared that recommendations for improving EFL teacher education were the target of many reports issued during the previous years. One of the problems in EFL teacher preparation programs is the relationship between theory and practice. At most faculties of education, teacher preparation programme consists of campus-based theoretical courses on teacher education, some about curriculum and methods of teaching, and others about history of education and psychology except for practicum in which pre-service teachers have their sole chance to practice teaching in schools (Cooper & Dershimer, 1999). These courses according to Bransford, Brown & Cocking (2006), seem disjoint and irrelevant to practice. They have nothing to do with what real teachers perform in real classrooms with real students. Therefore, pre-service teachers express their dissatisfaction of not being oriented enough toward practice.

The idea of only allowing pre-service teachers to apply theory during practicum has recently been criticized by many researchers. Freeman (1991) states that pre-service teachers, during the practicum have to carry out what they have learnt and not to be told what and how to teach. In addition, Crookes (2003) declares that practising teaching is not only to make pre-service teachers apply a certain body of pedagogical knowledge but also to give pre-service teachers the chance to take their first steps into their future career and to critically examine their own teaching practices. Diaz- Maggioli (2003) indicates that English pre-service teachers have certain needs that should be satisfied during their teaching practice.

One important need is that they should be competent in monitoring and describing their own and their students' behaviours.

(Seifeddin, 2002) indicates that teacher education programs encounter many challenges. The most important one is sticking to the usual individualistic pattern, widely used nowadays, that stresses teacher isolation and self-containment. But as this does not go with education for the 21 century it becomes imperative that teacher education programs attempt to replace this pattern with new one that stresses collaboration instead of isolation. EFL pre-service teachers find little mental stimulating activities in their preparation programme. This inadequacy makes them isolated in their school classroom and their motivation to learn more about teaching is negatively affected (Eldib, 1993). Faculty lecturers as a result of insufficient time and their work load neglect involving pre-service teachers in collaboration, dialogue, and reflection. This problem in pre-service teacher education hinders their professional development that is, to a great extent depends on, self-reflection (Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Schon, 1991). Professional development requires pre-service teachers to examine their beliefs about the teaching/ learning process and increase their knowledge of theories of language, of the psychology, and of language learning (Parrott, 1993).

English language teacher education has been the target of many investigations in the Egyptian and other Arab countries contexts (Eldib, 2003; Elokda, 2005; Mostafa, 2005; Seifeddin, 2002). Some of these studies were concerned investigating the problems of teaching performance. Other studies concentrated on developing reflective thinking skills of English pre-service teachers during their practicum experience while others were still concerned with the conceptual bases that guide the practices followed in the preparation of English teachers. There was a strong agreement among these studies that there should not be a gap between theory and practice in EFL pre-service teacher preparation programme.

There is a positive relation between EFL pre-service teachers' teaching performance and reflective thinking. And finally, there is a need for alternative professional development strategies to developing pre-service teachers' teaching performance. Results of the semi-structured interview that has been administered during the academic year 2009/2010, as part of a pilot study in preparation for

this research and to explore the research problem, highlighted the need for the current study in the Egyptian context (See Appendix 1 for details). The sample of the pilot study was 8 EFL pre-service teachers in their fourth year of their preparation programme and 4 lecturers who were teaching the EFL methodology courses at Shebin Elkom, Faculty of Education. At the beginning, the interviewees were informed about the aim of the pilot study and assured that their answers are confidential, and that the recorded interview data are used for research purposes only.

Participants' answers to the semi-structured interview questions highlighted the following points:

- Lecturers believe that EFL pre-service teacher preparation programme needs to be revised to move away from the teacher-centred model towards an active learner centred model which aims to enable pre-service teachers to analyze their context, devise their own local methodologies and to get closer to schools.
- EFL pre-service teachers voiced their need to practice how different philosophies, pedagogies, and theories may be applied in different school situations. They find it difficult to practically plan a lesson or manage their classrooms at practicum. They need help to become reflective of their own learning, understand the content they teach and self-examine their learning experiences using journal writing or peer review.
- There are no assessment criteria by which pre-service teachers' teaching skills are marked or graded, and no formative assessment of pre-service teachers' teaching development takes place. The only available type of assessment is the summative one that takes place at the end of year. There is no evaluation system that contains criteria to assess teaching and to provide evidence for teaching actions. Moreover, the ability of evaluating one-self and others in addition to accepting criticism is completely neglected in teacher training.
- EFL Pre-service teachers were overwhelmed when they first go into a classroom. As a faculty member and a supervisor of pre-service teachers at different preparatory and secondary schools, I observed that prospective teachers are often pressured as they are required to develop teaching

competences before practicing them in their preparation programme. As untrained teachers, they are pushed into classrooms without ample opportunities to learn either the theoretical underpinnings of the field or the necessary tools to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

- Pre-service teachers experience a great deal of concern and anxiety regarding their teaching performance. This involves stress, uncertainty, frustration, and despair which could, in certain circumstances, be considered as a reality shock.
- Reflective practices are totally neglected in their preparation programme and this shortage has badly affected their professional development.
- Both lecturers and pre-service teachers hoped that the introduction of the new microteaching could provide evidence for pre-service teachers' teaching practices and a forum by which EFL pre-service teachers and lecturers can think deeply about their personal teaching practices and professional development.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

As the results of the pilot study above indicate, the EFL pre-service teachers felt they had not had enough practice before starting their practicum in schools. They need to enhance their teaching skills before having adequate practice in their preparation programme. Another main concern for pre-service teachers and their lecturers was the use of summative assessment as the only way to grade them during their preparation programme, as this did not give real evidence of their teaching actions. Finally, pre-service teachers lack the ability of being able to reflect on their teaching practices.

The problems that surfaced in the study were further supported by the results of previous related studies such as Seifeddin (2002), Eldib (2003), Elokda (2005), Mostafa (2005) and Caries & Alemedia (2006) who pinpointed the following: Pre-service teachers' teaching performance is in great need of development. No pair or group work is conducted in the sessions. Pre-service teachers do not adequately apply what they have studied in the methodology course and other subjects, in addition to rarely practising any kind of assessment or feedback skills during their

preparation programme. Pre-service teachers' lack of confidence affects their teaching performance. Their lack of confidence is due to the fact that they are not competent enough and have not received appropriate preparation for practicum. Supervisors and in-service teachers always search for points to criticize rather than giving them encouraging them towards better performance in class. Moreover, there is no time or place specialized for discussing and evaluating their teaching performance in schools. And finally they recommended using new approaches and techniques to develop their teaching performance.

1.4 Research Significance and Contribution to Knowledge

The current research is expected to contribute significantly to Egyptian EFL higher education in terms of EFL pre-service teacher education, educational research, and curriculum planning and design. The study will also contribute to knowledge in this field by providing an insight into the application of the microteaching course in the wider context of TEFL education, not just in Egypt. In addition, it might guide both lecturers and pre-service teachers' performance in their microteaching course and improve English language teacher education in a number of different ways. Regarding EFL pre-service teacher education, it is expected to enable pre-service teachers recognize the role played by microteaching in enhancing their teaching performance. This, in turn, is significant for teacher educators since it aims to provide implications for developing their methods of teaching and assessment. It might also help to assure the importance of pre-service teachers' needs as this enables teacher educators to know how to satisfy these needs and conduct successful and memorable learning. Finally, it helps highlight the significant development in the academic achievement of pre-service teachers in their practicum and prepare highly qualified teachers of English.

At the level of educational research, it could open a new path in education for further interpretive-critical approach based studies which has been totally neglected in Egypt. To the researchers' knowledge, no previous studies used a mixed methods approach to investigate the role of microteaching in enhancing Egyptian pre-service teachers of English teaching performance. It could also serve

as an example of the triangulation of research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and reflective journals as this combination of research methods has not been widely used in Egypt before. In terms of curriculum planning and design, the study could help curriculum designers take into consideration the students' needs and interests in re-designing their curriculum and open the curriculum planners and designers' minds to different approaches to the application of microteaching.

1.5 Research Aims

In accordance with the material reviewed, and taking the needs of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers into consideration, the proposed study aims to:

- Identify the focuses of the microteaching course from the pre-service teachers' and lecturers' perspectives.
- Investigate the difficulties encountered by Egyptian university lecturers and their pre-service teachers in the course.
- Explore Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' views concerning the helpfulness of the microteaching course in enhancing their teaching performance at schools.

As this research aims to explore the perceptions of third year EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers concerning the microteaching course, it adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods to data collection and analysis to explore pre-service teachers' unique ways of doing things which contribute to their teaching context and actions.

In view of the specificity of the Egyptian context, the interpretive paradigm is an appropriate choice to perceive the context within which pre-service teachers and lecturers perform, and how events and actions happen (Maxwell, 1996; David. Silverman, 2005) as knowledge, in this paradigm, is seen as a social construction (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000) and Grix (2004), the interpretative approach could help the researcher to explain from the insider's view why things have happened, characterize how people experience and make sense of their social worlds, and explain the ways they interact together and

the settings in which these interactions take place through rich contextual description.

1.6 Conclusion and overview of forthcoming chapters

This chapter (Chapter one) presents the problem of the study, including the rationale for conducting the research, its paradigm, associated assumptions and questions. Furthermore, the purpose of the study and its expected significance have been discussed and highlighted.

Chapter Two presents the context of the study including the country profile, the nature and philosophy of the Egyptian education, the nature of educational reform, and the status of English language education.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical background of the study. It includes a discussion about educational change and curriculum implementation. It details literature on models and theories of EFL teacher education, professional development of EFL pre-service teachers and EFL microteaching. Each topic is explained followed by some related studies to positively or negatively emphasise the points discussed and to place the current study among them.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology. This includes description of the main modes of inquiry and a rationale for adopting both the interpretative and critical research paradigms in the study. This is followed by illustration of the design of the methods of the study, how they were conducted, transcribed and analysed.

Chapter Five presents a detailed analysis of the quantitative and the qualitative data obtained through the conduction of the questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews and the reflective journal. It connects and synthesises both the quantitative and qualitative results by building up and revealing the negative or positive relationships among the different variables investigated or emerged throughout the analysis.

Chapter Six discusses the findings of data analysis with specific reference to the context of the study and in the light of the literature, giving a comprehensive answer to the research questions.

Chapter Seven presents the implications of the research findings in educational research in general and in EFL curriculum planning and design, in particular.

Further, it presents a socio-constructionist model to be used in the Egyptian context for designing EFL microteaching curricula, then, it concludes with recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader a general view of the context in which the study is conducted. The chapter gives a general description of the educational system in Egypt starting from its philosophy, structuring and challenges, to educational reform programmes. Emphasis is placed on English language education and its aims in the Egyptian context. Finally, with regard to the EFL teacher training programme, the role of the Centre for the Development for English Language Teaching (CDELT) in achieving national goals is brought into focus for its importance in the whole purpose of the investigation.

The Arab Republic of Egypt lies in the north eastern part of Africa and on the Sinai Peninsula in the western part of Asia. It is approximately one million square kilometres in size. The population of Egypt was estimated in 2012 as 82,330,773 according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics in Egypt (2012).

2.2 The Nature and Philosophy of Education in Egypt

The Egyptian educational system is among the largest systems in the world in terms of the number of students enrolled in its institutions. As of 1999-2000, the system reported according to The World Bank (2007) an enrolment of approximately 16 million students in about 37 thousand schools. The system also employs a large number of civil employees, of about 3.8 million. The Egyptian 1971 Constitution states that based on the two main pillars of equity and equal opportunities, education is a right for every Egyptian. According to the Constitution articles 18, 20 and 21, the Egyptian government is obliged to offer free and adequate educational opportunities at all its different stages for every Egyptian and to ensure equity, so fairness and impartiality (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004).

Sufficient educational opportunities for Egyptians are affected by some challenges and difficulties. The Egyptian educational system includes what Hargreaves (1997) explained as teachers' low levels both in the knowledge of the subject matter and in pedagogy; a mismatch between syllabuses and curricula drawn at the central national level and the actual teaching learning situation; and mechanistic learning and teaching methods. Other negative features include: examination-driven instruction, politicisation, bureaucracy that hinders the achievement of essential targets in connection with schooling, limited resources, centralisation, and unfair distribution of educational services amongst the state regions (Jarrar & Massialas, 1992). The Egyptian educational system concentrates on the act of imposing regulations and rules rather than on enhancing students' learning. In addition, teachers do not establish or develop their work to be based on their students' learning needs but according to the national directives on lesson planning and curriculum. This teachers' attitude towards the process of teaching and learning strengthens memorization, mechanistic teaching and rote learning, according to The World Bank (1996). Another crucial factor that affects the quality of teachers is the policy adopted by the government to appoint non-qualified teachers who have graduated from other faculties such as art, science or law. These teachers are not pedagogically trained to teach in the schools (The World Bank, 2002).

Many of the shortcomings of the educational system, and indeed its failure to bring about effective long-term reform, have been due to its being highly centralised, in spite of attempts at decentralisation. The system is very hierarchical, with the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) at the top of the pyramid. The system is based on seniority rather than merit. Due to its highly centralised and bureaucratic nature, the educational system defines and predetermines what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, the roles of teachers and learners, as well as the intended outcomes of the educational process. Given this character, the Egyptian educational system is almost impervious to influences and initiatives from teachers, parents and learners (Gahin, 2001). Egyptian education has been portrayed according to Hargreaves (1997) as "undemocratic", "teacher-centred", and "highly competitive". Students' greatest concern is to store and maintain information so that when it is needed, they pour it out in the exam which is held to

test their evidence of learning. Their exam scores are the sole criteria for students' success.

2.3 Higher Education System in Egypt

The Egyptian educational system is a highly extensive one as about 30% of Egyptians go to university. The Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education supervises the universities. The system of higher education experiences the same difficulties encountered by the pre-university system such as inadequate infrastructure, facilities, equipment and human resources that lead to its failure to satisfy the rising demands of its students as there has not been any increase in its expenditure to improve its programmes and technologies (Abdellah, Taher, & Hosny, 2008). This is basically because of the system's concentration on rote learning and memorization rather than developing its students' skills and creativity. The curriculum is centralised enough to embody the political and egalitarian principles presented in free education and ensuring that all students have access to the same programme of study (Richards, 1992).

Most of the universities in Egypt are publicly funded and there are small fees the students have to pay for enrolment. Public universities are overcrowded, with several thousands of students. Some other universities in Egypt, both Egyptian and foreign, are privately funded and usually have a smaller number of students and much higher tuition fees. Admission to both kinds of universities operates through a centralized admission office after the government announces the results of the General Secondary Education Certificate exams (Docherty, 2005). Students who have higher marks have a better chance to find a place for themselves at the faculty of their choice while other low-scoring students have to search for a place in a private university whose admission policy is similar to international enrolment procedures.

2.4 English Language Education in Egypt

English has long been given a special status in Egypt, whether as a wicked tool to change the Egyptian culture during the British colonization (Stadlbauer, 2010) or as "an important means for educational, economic and social development"

(Schaub, 2000, p. 235). The main objectives set for English language teaching (ELT) are to develop the ability to use English for communication; to foster favourable attitudes towards learning in general and towards appropriate foreign cultures in particular; to develop an awareness of the nature of language and language learning, and hence to achieve cross-cultural awareness. This helps students' lifelong learning, develops self-independence and promotes collaboration as a step towards bringing up citizens who appreciate teamwork.

This relates to the theoretical aims of education. However, as far as the EFL classroom is concerned, it is no different from any other school subject, since it is a part of the whole system. EFL pre-service teachers are Arabs who speak English as a foreign language. They speak Arabic as a first language and they have studied English in their native country for at least ten years as a part of their study, as learning English starts in the elementary school both in public and private schools. The dominant pattern in the majority of classrooms is that of an active teacher and passive learners. The teacher is the sole authority to decide "what" and "how" in the teaching and learning process, based on the knowledge spelled out by the stakeholders (Holliday, 1996). The different stakeholders include educational administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, parents, support staff, community, business, and policy-makers. Each of these stakeholders represents interest groups that possess a different agenda. Despite the challenges that are present in the Egyptian context, every decision should be taken with the best interests of the EFL learners in mind.

In terms of quality, the teaching and learning of English is affected by teachers' low proficiency in this foreign language. Teachers' main interest and aim is to get their students to pass their exams. Students' marks in such exams are the evidence of teachers' success, along with their authorities, in achieving the aims of the Education Dept. (Hargreaves, 2001). Besides, a large percentage of primary and preparatory school teachers are non-specialists (41%) (World Bank, 2010). In addition, evaluation techniques do not cope with the development in learning and teaching methodology techniques, and are quite far from the actual assessment of students' performance.

All this is why it is not surprising to find a parallel system of education called "private tuition" aiming at enabling students to pass the exams and get high marks. This private and marks oriented tuition has long been fought by the government, which tries hard to take serious and severe measures against it. However, these efforts have been in vain up to now. In Egypt, the average teacher's salary is not sufficient for them to live on, and thus they sell their tutoring services after school. Cultural values play a crucial role behind the growth of private tuition in Egypt. Egyptian culture stresses that a real man is a university graduate, and not a worker or a farmer, so people are encouraged to fulfil themselves through learning academic knowledge, instead of practical knowledge (Bray, 2007). This puts a lot of pressure on Egyptian families who sacrifice their lives for their children's education because they are greatly committed to the goal of having their children attend the top universities such as the faculty of Medicine or the faculty of Pharmacy. Both students and their families believe that the best way to succeed in life is to go to one of the top universities, and these require having high marks in examinations.

2.5 Educational Reform: Efforts and Challenges

Educational reform is an issue that has been ranked as one of the top issues of the Egyptian government's plan since 1990 (UNESCO, 2003). Although considerable efforts have been made, including increased amounts of resources dedicated to the educational reform process, many steps still need to be taken. Reform efforts have encountered many obstacles and challenges such as population growth that requires greater quantities of educational services. Another challenge is the Egyptian bureaucracy and its resistance to change in addition to the accumulated problems inherited from previous generations that are considered a heavy burden on the government's shoulders (UNESCO, 2004). Threats facing the educational sector in Egypt also include the need for graduates who are equipped with new skills and capabilities that are needed in our technologically competitive world, such as collaboration skills, effective oral and written communication competences, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004).

Recognizing that all these challenges facing the higher education sector affect its efficiency and the quality of its programmes, the government has acted to build political consensus on issues that are crucial to higher education reform. It has established a Higher Education Enhancement Programme (HEEP) that includes a wide range of stakeholders including industrialists and parliamentarians to shoulder the responsibility of such reform. Due to the dynamic nature of the reform, a strategic planning unit (SPU) was established to ensure the sustainability of planning and project monitoring during its phases (Memoire, 2006). The government is now looking for new ways of doing things and has started on a large-scale reform programme for improving the public education sector. The major achievements of the Higher Education Enhancement Programme (HEEP) have been integrated into the national Education strategic plan for the period 2008-2012. It aims to decentralize the national school structure, introduce school-based reform and improve human resources through professional development programmes (Abdellah et al., 2008). The increased emphasis on teacher training within the framework of the national education strategic plan is considered one of the crucial components of the reform plan.

2.5.1 Improving the EFL pre-service teacher training programme

The Centre for the Development of English Language Teaching (CDELTA) supported by the Integrated English Language Program (IELP-II) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), developed information about the instructional principles to develop Egyptian standards for teachers graduating from pre-service English teacher education programmes (STEP) (CDELTA, 2012). Through their professional preparation programme, pre-service teachers are assessed at each level to demonstrate expected performance and to meet the standards at increasingly complex levels. Constructing knowledge, developing practice, and fostering relationships are the themes that provide the foundation for each of the standards. These standards are grouped into five main domains covering classroom management, language, instruction, assessment, and professionalism, and they form the backbone of our teacher education programmes (CDELTA, 2012).

According to CDELTA (2012), to effectively prepare the pre-service teacher for his

future career, there should be a balance between theory and practice; between the “educational” and the “training” functions; the feasibility of proposals for change in teacher performance should be judged against the real constraints of the teaching context; and that training is best developed within the security of a system or “paradigm” of counsellor-teacher interaction. Examination of these principles offers an indication of the strategy of the CDELT approach to pre-service teachers’ preparation that ensures theoretical appreciation and practical application: rationale, experience, observation, trial and integration (CDELT, 2012).

Since the focus of this study is centred on prospective EFL teachers' perceptions of microteaching at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education, it will be useful to provide an overview of the microteaching course there.

2.5.2 The microteaching course at the Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education

This Faculty of Education was established in 1971 to offer bachelors’ degrees in association with the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Science. Theoretically, EFL teachers are prepared in the Faculty of Education through two complementary sets of courses. The first set of courses is mainly language proficiency (subject matter knowledge like English literature, translation, grammar, phonetics, and linguistics), and the second set is pedagogical (teaching proficiency), including courses like foundations of education, comparative education, and educational psychology, along with the teaching practicum that aims to prepare pre-service teachers for their prospective jobs. The practicum is jointly carried out and supervised by the Ministry of Education inspectors or supervisors along with staff from the faculties of education (Education, 2012).

The EFL microteaching course syllabus is determined by the head of the Curriculum and Instruction department in the Faculty of Education. A professor in each section of the department (i.e: Maths, English, French, Science) determines the course content, the staff members who are going to train the pre-service teachers, and the way it will be both carried out and assessed. According to the Faculty of Education, the course must take place over four sessions a week. It

begins in the second year of their preparation programme when students are equated with the theoretical components of the microteaching course. In the first semester they learn what microteaching is, its origin, why it is important and the stages of the microteaching course. This helps student teachers have a conceptual framework of this course. In the second part of the first semester they are trained how to micro-teach using different teaching skills and this covers the remaining part of the first semester as well as the whole of the second semester.

The phases through which a new skill is practised are as follows: (a) pre-service teachers are divided into small groups of seven to ten people (b) a lecturer presents the skill which is part of the microteaching component. The skill is defined, described and discussed; (c) student teachers are given instructions on how to prepare for their microteaching lesson; (d) each student teacher micro-teaches a 10 - 15-minute lesson using the skill to a group of ten to fifteen peers. The session sequence is: plan, teach, critique. The pre-service teachers who have presented a microteaching lesson receive multiple types of feedback from their classmates and lecturers. That is, they obtain: (a) oral feedback from both the lecturers and peers in the form of discussions that follow the instruction session; and (b) video-taping feedback that is orally discussed after the microteaching session. Self-reflection, written reports and journal-writing are not used on the course.

In the third year of their preparation programme, pre-service teachers start their teaching practice in the preparatory schools. An internal faculty member, or a mentor or supervisor, and an external Ministry of Education member together support pre-service teachers during their teaching practice and assess their actual performance in practicum.

The aim of this chapter has been to provide the layout of the Egyptian educational system so as to give the reader an overview about the context in which this study is conducted, elucidating why this study is important for Egyptian education in general and language education in Egypt in particular. The next chapter is devoted to reviewing the literature related to educational change, curriculum implementation, EFL teacher preparation programmes, and the role microteaching could play in improving pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections: EFL teacher education, microteaching, and educational reform. The first section reviews the literature on EFL teacher education models and theories. It also provides a detailed analysis of pre-service teacher development, mainly during teaching practice. There is also a discussion about pre-service teacher training modes. This leads directly to the next section, a thorough review of microteaching and its role and nature within a pre-service course, including research on stages, organisation and criticism of microteaching. It ends with an investigation of the rationale for using microteaching to improve the teaching performance of EFL pre-service teachers. The last section presents a brief overview of educational change, and the theoretical framework of Fullan (1991) and its dynamics. The section concludes by defining the curriculum, and the three perspectives of curriculum implementation.

3.2 EFL Pre-service Teacher Education Programme

The teacher is the crucial component in the educational system. Teacher education programmes encompass both pre-service and in-service teachers. In-service teachers have had classroom experience and seek professional development while pre-service teachers are recent trainee teachers enrolled in the faculties of education to finish their preparation programme. Since the focus of this research is not about in-service teacher education, but is concerned with EFL pre-service teacher preparation education, this study aims at adding to the literature about EFL teacher education in general and about EFL pre-service teacher education in particular. Learning to be a teacher requires multiple forms of learning. Just as child learners start their classroom journey with distinct experiences that affect their learning, pre-service teachers approach initial training with different beliefs, skills, abilities, aspirations, expectations, and knowledge. The teacher must be provided with real teaching practices through innovative methods so that they can develop their competency in basic teaching skills before going to an actual school or classroom situation.

Freeman (1989) proposes two principal educating strategies, i.e. teacher training and teacher development, within the education process through which the content of an EFL preparation programme is conducted. Freeman views EFL teacher education as an interactive process, which involves pre-service teachers and the collaborator who might be the lecturer, supervisor, mentor, or even a peer. He explains that teacher training is “a direct interference for modification initiated by the collaborator to work on discrete features of pre-service teachers’ skills and knowledge” (p. 39), whereas teacher development is an indirect influence and intervention to deal with the complex aspects of EFL teaching and is “contingent on the learner, the collaborator and their working together” (p. 40), for the purpose of generating change in pre-service teacher training and development. Likewise, Johnston (1994) proposes that EFL teacher education can be viewed in two possible ways, i.e. a broad way as encompassing all aspects of teachers' professional development in formalized settings, and a narrow way as "the preparation of teachers to be able to teach in classrooms" (p. 138).

In planning teacher education programmes, decisions should be made concerning which conception of teaching is considered as an appropriate basis for the programme. "Different conceptions of teaching have different implications for teacher education" as Wallace (1994, p. 133) states. He goes further to clarify that for some people, teaching is a kind of mystical experience that is hard to explain or describe. Under this abstract view of teaching, in which the teaching act cannot be analyzed and described in rational, consistent terms, teacher education cannot be justified. In a less radical conception, teaching is viewed as an artistic performance that depends in large measures on the characteristics of the particular teacher and so cannot be reliably predicted from teacher education. Also, teaching is seen as a craft which has a set of specialized and skilled physical techniques that teachers have to master during their education. In a research-oriented approach to EFL teaching, in which it is viewed as a science, the teachers' job would be to “apply theories of human learning and behaviour which has been tested in a systematic way” (Kontra, 1997, p. 242).

Cross & Wyllie (2002, p. 20) claim that teacher education aims not only to help pre-service teachers acquire appropriate knowledge but also to support them to continue learning in order to “master the professional knowledge upon which the practice is founded”. (Kumara, 2003) emphasizes that a functioning teacher preparation programme should direct pre-service teachers to produce knowledge more than applying it, to become transformative intellectuals rather than being passive technicians, and master the teaching model rather than modelling the expert teacher (Richards, 2000). According to Kunzman (2003, p. 6) the main characteristics of a promising teacher education programme are “encouraging close links between campus and schools, enhancing pre-service teachers' understanding of student learning, [and] supporting training experience in a collaborative and reflective context”. Stressing the practice of self and peer observation, reflecting on their own and their peers' performances in actual teaching situations should be employed to gain a deeper awareness of the process and principles. This could be done through audio or video recordings, seminars and reflective activities. From the above discussion, I can argue that EFL preparation programmes should include both short-term professional training and lifelong teacher development and that both pre-service teachers and lecturers need to work together in exploring the process of learning how to teach.

3.2.1 Models of Foreign Language Teacher Education

Recognizing the lack of a distinct theoretical framework for EFL teaching and learning, Freeman (1989) introduced a descriptive model of teaching that defines language teaching as a decision-making operation. In this model, knowledge refers to subject matter knowledge, the learners, and the contexts where teaching is occurring, while skills include methods, teaching techniques, activities, and material. Knowledge and skills are together the teaching's knowledge base, and individual teachers' use of knowledge and skills can be affected by other factors such as the teacher's attitude and awareness. According to Freeman's model, teachers' awareness “fires and monitors their attention to the knowledge they possess, their skills, or their attitudes, and therefore it explains why teachers grow and change in their learning to teach” (p. 34).

The descriptive model of teaching by Freeman suggests the importance of

teachers' awareness of their teaching practices, his ideas about separating teachers' awareness and attitude from their knowledge and skills seems to limit the knowledge base of teaching to observable factors such as teaching methods, and classroom activities. Also, this model raises a question about the complex process of foreign language teaching and ignores other possible factors that might contribute to the teaching learning process such as school support and language policy.

In considering teaching as a profession, Wallace (1991) defines three different models on which teacher or other professional education has been based and organized: (a) the craft model, in which pre-service teachers' professional competence is developed through study with an experienced practitioner by copying the expert's demonstration and tracking his/her instructions; (b) the applied science model, where trainee teachers receive findings of scientific knowledge from experts in the relevant area, and put the scientific findings into practice; and (c) the reflective model, which allows pre-service or practising teachers to achieve their professional competence through a continuing cycle of practice and reflection relating to their pre-training knowledge and the knowledge they gain during the course of study.

According to Wallace, in the craft model, the wisdom of teaching practice is static and resides in experienced teachers, and pre-service teachers only learn pedagogical skills and techniques as a pre-existing body of knowledge derived from expert teachers. For a long time, EFL researchers have argued the limitations of the craft or apprenticeship model (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Critics have indicated that traditional EFL teacher preparation programmes following a craft or apprenticeship model have inhibited "the self-directed growth of pre-service teachers" and "failed to promote their professional development" (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 23). The apprenticeship model which views teaching as a craft does not allow pre-service teachers to explore scientific knowledge concerning how teachers think, behave, and make decisions and fails to acknowledge the role of pre-service teachers as active learners in a social context.

This argument leads to the model of teaching as applied science, within which a

body of knowledge of teaching is derived from experimental science, and is used to achieve certain defined educational objectives (Wallace, 1991). Wallace notes a problem with the applied science model, that is, the division between research and practice, and therefore he introduces the reflective model as a solution to foreign language teacher education. In this line of thinking, foreign language teacher programmes of a reflective model need to prepare pre-service teachers to reflect on their practices in the classrooms.

Similar to Wallace (1991), Freeman & Richards (1993) use a framework proposed by Zahorik (1986) to analyze conceptions of foreign language teaching and discuss how these conceptions shape certain forms of EFL education. According to Zahorik (1986), conceptions of teaching in general can be classified as (1) science/research; (2) theory/philosophy; and (3) art/craft conceptions. As Freeman & Richards (1993, p.195) explain, scientifically based conceptions of foreign language teaching assume teaching is shaped by scientific investigations, "whereas theory and value-based conceptions view teaching as promoting particular values" and suggest that "justifications for teaching can be arrived at [through] reason or rational thought" (p. 201). The third category of conceptions, referred to as art/craft conceptions of teaching, is to view foreign language teaching as an art which depends upon "every teacher's personality and skills" (p. 205). Taking these three conceptions as a base point, Freeman & Richards (1993) discuss three different approaches to EFL teacher education: (1) the non-compatibility position, i.e., "each conception of teaching implies an independent and non-compatible approach to teacher education"; (2) the eclecticist position, which holds "that conceptions of teaching are equally sound and to be regarded as alternatives" in teacher education; and (3) the developmental position, which views "the three conceptions of teaching as standing in a progression" and in the evolution of teacher education (p. 211).

The above discussion shows that while some researchers (e.g., Wallace, 1991; Freeman & Richards, 1993) explore the possible models of foreign language teacher education using different classifications, three different approaches to the design of language teacher programmes, i.e., craft, applied science, and reflection,

can be identified. In spite of the fact that some researchers (e.g., Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Wallace, 1991) have put forward the reflective model, they overlook the complexity of the context where teacher programmes are to be implemented, and therefore fail to consider the possibility and suitability of these models in various educational contexts especially in EFL settings where certain factors such as language policy and the education system may have an influence on the design of foreign language teacher programmes. This is in line with what Richards (1994) asserts, that issues related to foreign language teacher education are highly complex concerning conceptions of teaching, dimensions of knowledge, and teachers' lives and careers, and need to be addressed in a coherent research agenda. As is clear from the above discussion, there is no single best model for EFL teacher education programmes, because of the difference in the context where the programmes are conducted. The context is complex, dynamic and culturally, politically and socially bounded.

3.2.2 Knowledge Base of EFL Pre-service Teachers' Education

According to Richards (1996), the knowledge base for foreign language teaching comprises two levels: first, knowledge related to subject matter and the teaching content; and second, knowledge about the teachers' personal philosophy of teaching or in other words the "teacher's view of what constitutes good teaching" (p. 284). Richards characterizes teachers' working principles developed from personal views of teaching as "teachers' maxims". He claims that the study of teachers' maxims could provide a useful perspective for pre-service teachers to examine their own teaching, and that it deserves recognition in EFL education programmes because it has a critical role in facilitating their professional development.

In comparison with Richards, Wallace (1991) asserts that foreign language teacher education consists of two dimensions of knowledge: "received knowledge," which is fact, data, and theories related to scientific research in the profession of EFL teaching; and experiential knowledge relating to the "professional's practice experience deriving from knowing in action and reflection" (p. 17). Based on Wallace's categories, pre-service teachers in an EFL

teacher preparation programme might obtain received knowledge through courses such as introduction to linguistics, language development, foreign language acquisition, classroom management, and EFL teaching methodology; while developing experiential knowledge takes place through practice teaching in EFL. Wallace argues that pre-service teachers' received knowledge can be related to their experiential knowledge through a reciprocal, reflective model of teacher education as in the reciprocal relationship between received knowledge and experiential knowledge. Pre-service teachers can reflect on their received knowledge taking into account classroom experience (e.g., observation and practice teaching), which in turn can illuminate the knowledge received in the teacher programme.

3.2.3 Context-Based Re-conceptualization of TEFL Knowledge Base

According to Freeman & Johnson (1998), the EFL teacher knowledge base needs to be re-conceptualized to focus on the context in which the activity of teaching happens. They also assert that constituents of teachers' knowledge are determined by teachers themselves, rather than by researchers, and are socially framed as a result of the teachers' experiences in the classrooms where they work. Therefore, teachers themselves, their perspectives and experiences need to be valued in the process of the construction of teachers' knowledge. Freeman & Johnson also record that the knowledge base of EFL teacher education is divided into separate courses taught using traditional instructional methods and unrelated to the actual activities of teaching in real classrooms. To redefine the core of foreign language teacher education and to shift the underlying assumption of teaching from a behavioural view to a constructivist view, they propose "an epistemological framework" (p. 405) for the EFL education knowledge base that centres on the teaching activities and addresses EFL pre-service teachers, and the nature of the schools.

In order to conceptualize the professional learning process and how the knowledge is used in the context of teaching by pre-service teachers, Calderhead (1988) proposes a model of knowledge use in teaching. In this model, Calderhead acknowledges the interrelationships among practical, academic knowledge, meta-

cognitive processes and conceptions of learning to teach. He differentiates between practical knowledge, which is action-related and mainly derived from teachers' own experiences in classroom, and academic knowledge, which is referred to as theoretical, specially developed in teacher education and may inform classroom practice. Meta-cognitive processes are applied as a linking of knowledge to action that may influence how the knowledge bases are structured and employed.

It can be argued here that Calderhead's model is in accordance with the interpretive paradigm in that in the case of EFL teacher education, it is recognized that learning to teach EFL involves a complex interaction among pre-service teachers' past experiences as learners of EFL, personal purposes, and knowledge base of EFL teaching. Furthermore, it acknowledges that individual teachers are the builders of the teaching knowledge and that they actively construct the meaning of their learning to teach on the foundation of their past experiences, and personal purposes and agendas. The conception of situated learning (Lave, 1991) needs to be mentioned here when talking about the constructivist approach of EFL teacher education. Learning to teach EFL is a process of becoming a knowledgeable skilful EFL teacher and growing into an effective member of "the EFL teaching profession community" (Lave, 1991, p. 65). The concepts of constructivism and situated learning highlight the importance of the learning-to-teach process as one of knowledge building.

3.3 Theory and Practice in EFL Teacher Education

After reviewing previous studies regarding plausible models and a knowledge base for language teacher education, focus will be laid on issues related to theory and practice in EFL teacher education. Johnson (1996) suggests that foreign language teacher education programmes should concentrate on pre-service teachers' process of making sense of theory in the teaching context. In arguing the role of theory in EFL language teacher education, Johnson claims that "more realistic expectations" are needed about what theory can and cannot do for EFL teachers (p. 765). Also, educators must realize that theory cannot fully inform practice, and that the problems encountered by pre-service teachers are generally caused by constraints in the school and classroom rather than by the result of a lack of

knowledge about theory. To make theory relevant to practice, she asserts that EFL education needs to involve pre-service teachers in a process of making sense of theory, as theory is situated in the context of teaching, and pre-service teachers can express their opinions about what they do and reflect on theory “within the context of their practice” (p. 767).

Ellis (1990) notes that foreign language preparation programmes, although they may vary in their audience and approaches, all give information about the EFL teaching theory and practice and this information could be introduced as explanation of the language theoretical conceptions and the procedures for teaching lessons, such as lesson plans, activities and teaching materials. Viewing language teacher preparation programmes as mainly comprising experiential and awareness-raising practices, Ellis proposes an analytical framework for describing teacher preparation activities and procedures concerning awareness-raising practices. According to Ellis (1990), “experiential practices involve the pre-service teacher in actual teaching” such as teaching practice or simulated practice, while “awareness raising practices” (p. 27) aim to enhance pre-service teacher's understanding of the practical techniques they can use in lessons and the principles underlying foreign language teaching. He asserts that teacher educators need to be aware of the various forms that dialogue might take between teacher educators and teacher learners such as e-mail, or conferencing in office, and how individual pre-service teacher might employ dialogical practices differently in establishing and maintaining “dialogical relations with the teacher educator and peers” (p. 169).

3.3.1 Practice in EFL Teacher Education

EFL teacher preparation programmes include a theoretical knowledge base and a practical component such as EFL methodology and practicum. These practical courses have traditionally been central to EFL teacher education, although it is recognized that these methods should not be taught as models for effective teaching (Crandal, 2000). In order to systematically study language teaching and accordingly to derive the theories of teaching and principles for foreign language teacher education, Richards (1990) proposes two approaches to the study of

language teaching. These two approaches include “a micro-approach that examines teaching in relation to its observable characteristics” (p. 4), and a macro-approach that examines “the total context of classroom in awareness-raising activities” in language teacher preparation programmes. He also lists possible procedures for exploiting awareness-raising activities that are available to teacher educators, such as lectures, group/pair discussion, workshops, and demonstrations. Wallace (1991) suggests that in the academic process, teacher educators should help and guide pre-service teachers to apply and practice knowledge received in different learning contexts, and the application of academic information to practice is a rather sophisticated process, which most pre-service teachers cannot perform without guidance.

Practicum, as part of the course to practice teaching in Egypt, is a time for experimentation and one of the few opportunities in which Egyptian pre-service teachers of EFL can try out techniques and strategies of learning. Corrigan (1994) pointed out that practicum is the only relevant experience for integrating their knowledge and practice. Therefore, it is necessary in any teacher preparation programme to have a course for learners to observe other teachers during their teaching and to do independent practice. Jones & Vesilind (1996) describe teaching practice as the process of implementing prior knowledge about theory and methods and perhaps most importantly, rebuilding prior knowledge to account for experience and to create for oneself more coherent concepts about teaching.

The chief purpose of a practicum is not to make pre-service teachers apply a certain body of pedagogical knowledge; but to let them take the initial step in a life-long journey of professional growth (Mule, 2006). Crookes (2003) also asserts that this entails engaging pre-service teachers in reflective practice. Although practicum is one of the most important elements in pre-service teachers’ preparation programmes, Cooper (1995, p. 593) questions the value of learning through practicum that depends on “automated apprenticeship” and lacks theory and structure. Crandal (2000, p. 5) points out that it is the time most pre-service teachers “struggle in the real teaching”, since there is “a misconnection” between

the beliefs they have in their minds about language teaching and learning and what they have learnt at their college. El Okda (2005) states that EFL practicum is by its very nature a practical course that depends on face to face interaction. However, given the constantly rising numbers of pre-service teachers of English, each supervisor has to supervise more and more pre-service teachers. This makes the course simply unmanageable and dependent on traditional resources. He adds another problem: the unsupported teacher, as pre-service teachers sometimes find little opportunity or support in their schools for trying out even the practical advice they have been given in their courses at the university. Abu-Rahmah (2001, p. 79) highlights another problem within teaching practice in the Egyptian context, that is the lack of “a standardized observation form” to be used by supervisors whether internal (faculty member) or external (ministry member) to assess the actual performance of pre-service teachers.

From the above discussion, it is clear that practicum is a means to practise the theoretical courses pre-service teachers receive in faculties of education by actually teaching in schools. Also, whatever the theory preparation pre-service teachers receive in faculties of education, they should at all times be encouraged to experiment and develop their own knowledge about teaching. While practising teaching in the classroom, they face a lot of problems. Investigating these problems would contribute to the effectiveness of their teaching performance. Caires & Alemedia (2005) agree with Corrigan (1994) in that practising teaching in the faculties of education needs to be changed to create more opportunity for professional practice through, according to Cheng, Ren, & Wang (2003) video recordings, feedback, journal writing, and discussions.

Research has also suggested that pre-service teachers themselves find their preparation programmes irrelevant to teaching practice or difficult to follow and that there is a gap between theory and practice (Luo, 2001). To learn about possible approaches to addressing the gap, which seems seriously related to foreign language teacher education, in the following section, studies dealing with this particular issue will be reviewed.

3.4 Microteaching to Link Theory with Practice

In order to merge theory and practice in EFL teacher education programmes, Gaudart (1994) recommends that educators should put the curriculum into practice by employing the methodology used in language teaching and applying the techniques and methods to teaching pre-service teachers, such as small group work, role play, case studies and problem-solving activities. Johnson (1996) proposes that foreign language teacher education programmes should concentrate on the pre-service teachers' process of making sense of theory in the teaching context. In arguing the role theory could play in EFL teacher education, Johnson claims that "more realistic expectations" are needed about what theory can and cannot do for foreign language teachers (p. 765). Teacher educators must realize that theory cannot fully inform practice, and that the problems encountered by pre-service teachers are generally caused by constraints in the school and classroom rather than by the result of a lack of knowledge about theory. To make theory relevant to practice, Russell (1988) and Johnson (1996) assert that EFL teacher education needs to engage pre-service teachers in a process of making sense of theory. To foster a making-sense process in pre-service teachers that allows them to interpret and negotiate the meaning of teaching in context, several modes of teaching which foreign language teacher education programmes should rely on more, such as case-based methods, professional development schools, and portfolio assessment, were suggested for use (Eraut, 1993; Gaudart, 1994; Johnson, 1996). These models suggest that educators should help pre-service teachers acquire and sustain the disposition to theorize, which would in turn affect the development of their theorizing capacities as well as self-generated learning, e.g., searching for, inventing, and implementing new ideas throughout their teaching careers. The teaching models also imply that the gap between theory and practice in EFL teacher education programmes might be approached through alternative curriculum design (e.g., integrated school-university curricula and professional development schools). In addition, they indicate the importance of self-initiated learning for both pre-service teachers and educators. Moreover, the above studies raise a question regarding the role of educators in helping pre-service teachers to link theory with practice in EFL pre-service programmes.

It can be argued here that it is necessary to develop a systematic framework for analyzing EFL teacher programmes in order to better understand EFL teacher preparation practice. This possible framework of analysis is expected to take into account individual educational contexts and to address criteria for making decisions in selecting teacher preparation activities as well as in designing teacher programmes. Teacher preparation programmes have been changing in the last few years in Egypt. New techniques have been and are being tested in many teacher education institutions. An ingredient that has been lacking in this area is a safe environment for student teachers to practise the methods that they are taught in the professional courses. This safe environment can be achieved by the use of the microteaching course that has been used in many teacher preparation programmes to connect theory with practice. Also, it provides opportunities for immediate feedback and close supervision as well as safe practice (Harichandan, 2010). All of these advantages make microteaching an important training method around the world.

3.4.1 Development of Microteaching

Cruickshank (1987) defines microteaching as a brief teaching encounter in which pre-service teachers teach a twenty-minute lesson to a small number of learners who are usually their peers. The original purpose of microteaching lessons was to “give practice in each specific technical skill of teaching until the pre-service teacher reached an acceptable level of performance” (p. 431). Pre-service teachers usually practice teaching several times in this simplified context. MacLeod (1987) mentions that this teaching environment is simplified in the sense that the class size is small, the lessons are short and the tasks to perform are less complex as well.

Microteaching began in 1963 at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California (Cooper & Allan, 1970). This technique identified as microteaching developed after a research project to examine teacher education, and after the invention of the portable video tape recorder. The project of the research was a teacher education curriculum for interns. Included in the curriculum was a reduced teaching exercise called "demonstration teaching"(Olivero, 1970). Cooper and Allen (1970)described

the "demonstration teaching" exercise in a paper entitled "Microteaching: History and Present Status". The exercise involved the interns in a demonstration lesson, where they taught a game to a group of four students. Professors agreed that the experience was an anxiety-producing session that was of little value to anyone. From this artificial situation developed the concept of microteaching (Sedgwick & Harlyn, 1967). It was designed to provide pre-service teachers with a supportive environment to practise their teaching skills (Ogeyik, 2009)

The recording of the demonstration lesson with a video tape recorder was another important aspect in the development of microteaching. This approach was suggested in 1961 by Acheson, a doctoral candidate at Stanford University. A newspaper article about a German scientist who had invented a video tape recorder gave Acheson the idea that this would provide immediate feedback to the intern (Olivero, 1970). This feedback could then be used as a common frame of reference between the intern and the supervisor. The video tape recorder is not a necessity as a feedback method of microteaching, but it is the most dynamic method of feedback. Some educators seem to identify microteaching as being only short video-taped lessons. The artificial situation of "demonstration teaching" was altered by having the trainee teachers prepare a short lesson of their own choosing in their subject matter area (Cooper & Allan, 1970). This was definitely an improvement, but the procedure still seemed to lack direction. The missing ingredient was the teaching techniques dimension. The "how-to-teach" had not been provided for the beginner teachers (Sadker & Cooper, 1972). These teachers were going into the microteaching event with an emphasis on teaching content and with little concern for methodology. This was remedied by Aubertine (1967) when he gave the beginners specific instruction in the performance of a teaching skill. The skill that he used dealt with beginning a lesson. The practice of focusing on a single skill at a time evolved and proved to be quite successful.

Microteaching developed from the different factors that have been highlighted in this brief history. The technique is a real teaching situation, limited by time and student numbers. Usually the session was four to twenty minutes in length, and in most cases three to ten students were involved. Scaling down the lesson reduced the teaching act's difficulties to facilitate its complexities, thus allowing the trainee teacher to concentrate on certain teaching aspects. A model was usually presented to the trainee teacher before the microteaching encounter. Models could be a written description or a filmed, taped, or live demonstration of a specific skill, and the session often included teaching a micro-lesson and having immediate feedback on the pre-service teacher's strengths and weaknesses. The feedback could come from video, supervisors, students, or colleagues. Microteaching has several variable aspects that include lesson length, type of supervision and number and types of students (Sedgwick & Harlyn, 1967).

As microteaching began to spread to other institutions, minor changes in the format began to take place. Some teacher education programmes felt that the teaching skills approach model was not realistic and forced the trainee teacher to push for artificial reactions from the students. In just a short number of years researchers were testing many aspects of microteaching in an attempt to improve and refine the process (Guelcher, Travis, & Necheles, 1970).

3.4.2 Assumptions of Microteaching and its Cycle

Lakshmi & Rao (2009) pinpoint that microteaching has the following five essential propositions or assumptions: first, microteaching is real teaching although the teaching situation is a constructed one in the sense that trainee teachers and students work together in a practice situation. Second, microteaching reduces the complexities of normal classroom teaching, class size, and time. Third, it concentrates on training to achieve specific tasks. Included among these tasks are the practices of teaching techniques, the mastery of certain curricular materials, and the demonstration of teaching methods. Fourth, in the practice setting of microteaching, a high degree of control may be built into the training programme; and finally, microteaching very much expands the normal amount of feedback in teaching. The trainee engages in a critique of his maximum insight into his

performance, and several sources of feedback are put at his disposal. He analyses aspects of his own performance in the light of his goal with the guidance of a supervisor or colleague. The trainee and the supervisor go over student response forms that are designed to elicit students' reactions to specific aspects of his teaching. If the supervisor has video-tape available, he may use video-tape playback to show the trainee teacher how he performs and how he may improve. All this feedback can be immediately translated into practice where the trainee re-teaches shortly after the critique conference (Masats & Dooly, 2011a).

Lakshmi & Rao(2009), based on the above assumptions, point out that the microteaching cycle begins with planning a micro-lesson for 5-10 minutes which the lecturer will teach in front of a micro-class. Then, the trainee teacher is asked to teach focusing on the teaching skills modelled before. After that, teaching is evaluated by trainee teachers themselves, their peers and their supervisor who give feedback on the shortcomings noticed in the trainee teachers' teaching. A video can be used as an aid in the feedback cycle by playing back the video recordings. After giving feedback, the pre-service teacher is required to re-plan the lesson. This repeated cycle of "teach, feedback and re-teach" is critical as it is used for helping trainee teachers and not as a tool for making a value judgment of their teaching capacity. This is similar to both Şen's (2009) and Smith, Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers' (2008) cycle that includes a briefing stage, a preparation stage, a teaching stage and feedback from the class and supervisor; and finally a re-teach stage to improve their skills.

3.4.3 Research on Microteaching

At its beginning, microteaching functioned in a behaviourist framework because this was the paradigm in use in the 1960s. The main goal of microteaching at that time was to have pre-service and in-service teachers learn to teach one behaviourally defined skill at a time. This specific skill was taught usually through four basic steps: (a) methodical exposure to the specific teaching technique through teacher modelling or viewing a model film; (b) practice of the skill in question in a limited time with their peers; (c) videotape recording of the practice lesson to be analyzed, discussed and critiqued by the supervisor, peers and the

pre-service teacher; and finally (d) re-planning and re-teaching of the same lesson to another group of peers (Kallenbach & Gall, 1969; Peterson, 1973). But soon these behaviour modification approaches were strongly criticized because they were divorced from reality. McGarvey and Swallow (1986) present a wide list of criticisms of this approach of microteaching. Many aspects were criticized such as the excess of attention paid to the mechanics of teacher behaviour, the appropriateness of a technical skills approach for pre-service teachers and ignoring the individual differences among these teachers. Many inquiries were done at that time to see the efficiency of this method.

There are diverse findings among researchers about the effectiveness of using microteaching. Some point out that it has a positive effect (Jensen & Young, 1972) but others state that it has little or no effect (Katz, 1976). Most of these studies were carried out using an experimental design with control and experimental groups. Among the inquiries that conveyed positive effects are Jensen and Young's study in which the experimental group (the one that had microteaching) received higher ratings on the first five factors of a six-factor scale on a Teacher Performance Evaluation Scale. These authors concluded that microteaching had a positive effect and that microteaching provided pre-service teachers with problem-solving attitudes that improved their performance. But with all this controversy going on, microteaching was still being used in most teacher training programmes.

3.4.4 Advantages of Using Microteaching in Teacher Training Programmes

Microteaching kept growing and changing, adapting to the new teaching paradigms and incorporating trends such as cognitive learning aspects and humanistic aspects in teaching. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education stated that pre-service teachers desire to practise teaching and place a great significance on the different opportunities it offers to them. Microteaching provides a safe elementary learning context in which the pre-service teachers are introduced gradually into the teaching environment (McGarvey & Swallow, 1986). Furthermore, another advantage of using microteaching is that trainee teachers practice teaching with a small group of peers, that is, other pre-service teachers

acting as learners. This kind of training represents a two-fold benefit. On one hand, the novice teacher is practising in a non-threatening controlled environment with his/her peers. On the other hand, it enables the trainee teachers who are acting as students to profit from this experience from a learner's point of view. Also, the involvement of peers can result in a diverse and productive learning experience. Vygotsky (1968) asserts that social interaction is an essential component of the meaning-construction process. Class discussions between pre-service teachers and their peers can generate divergent collective thoughts, which could bring about a more profound level of understanding about teaching than would individual thought. Furthermore peer feedback is "delivered at a time when practice and opportunity for improvement are still available" (Blank & Heathington, 1987, p. 4) making the feedback immediate, meaningful and easy to absorb.

Through the many years of its use, microteaching has been adapted to new trends in teaching. Among these innovations is the use of videos for trainee teacher self-monitoring and stimulated recall, as well as the use of self-reflection through classroom diaries or journals. The incorporation of these devices has afforded pre-service teachers with a rich source of feedback such as videotape feedback for group discussion in class and individual analysis, trainee teacher self-evaluation and self-reflection through self-monitoring and/or video replay, and student-teacher journals or diaries, making microteaching a remarkable tool for teacher training programmes because novice teachers are nourished by these varied and eclectic sources. Yeany (1978) reported that the microteaching conditions which utilize either self-evaluation or instructor evaluation resulted in significantly higher ratings of teacher performance than microteaching without this condition.

3.4.5 Components of the microteaching course

Microteaching provides training of teaching skills to the pre-service teachers under controlled conditions. It is a technique which develops the particular skills in real situations to facilitate perfection in teaching (Ram Babu, 2007). Teaching is a complex task involving a large number of teacher activities. Both overt and covert teacher behaviours come into play. Overt behaviours are those which are “open to view”, i.e., observable, measurable and recordable. Covert behaviours refer to those which bring about a change in opinions and beliefs. Often, covert behaviours lead to overt behaviours. It is better to identify some observable skills than worrying about what is covert and then devise means to quantify them. Microteaching is all about demonstrating, quantifying and improving such teaching skills (Kumar, 2004).

The original microteaching format designed at Stanford University by Allen and Ryan consisted of modelling, practice and feedback, three interrelated aspects often discussed as components of microteaching programmes. Some of the central aspects of microteaching can thus be listed: acquisition and transfer of skills, microteaching skills, modelling and feedback (Ur- Rahman, 2004). These will form the basic structure when analysing the literature related to microteaching.

3.4.5.1 Modelling

The original reason for including modelling in microteaching programmes at Stanford University was simply that it was thought likely that skill learning would be facilitated if participants were able to view a demonstration prior to practice (Ross, Dunphy, & Jossey-Bass, 2007). One of the original developers of microteaching, McDonald (1973), supports the use of models of master teachers demonstrating particular classroom strategies as an important part of microteaching. He drew on his and others' theoretical and empirical evidence of behaviour modification which supported the result that behavioural changes take place as a result of observation and imitation. This fuelled the anti-microteaching lobby's argument of microteaching being a behaviouristic-mechanistic approach which they saw as the opposite of humanistic approaches. The use of expert models could actually inhibit skill acquisition as they are rejected by those trainees

who have more realistic and attainable standards for themselves (Cornford, 1991a). It is suggested that learning is more likely to be enhanced by using good but not perfectly polished performances of pre-service teacher models; "copying" models as opposed to "expert" models. It is further argued that observation and imitation form the basis of our learning within much of society as well as in the education sector and that providing one model only, with directions for its use, leads to "imitation"; but providing a number of examples with opportunity for analysis and decision-making provides a more viable cognitive approach (Perlberg, 1987).

The use of the word "imitation" is not in line with some of the studies which suggested that: first, learning is more likely to be enhanced by using good but not perfectly polished performances of pre-service teacher models. It may be useful then to develop over a period of time some videotaped examples of final year pre-service teachers conducting lessons both in natural classrooms and in laboratory settings, to demonstrate the skills being addressed. Second, if modelling is to be used, research has suggested that many models be provided to accommodate differences. It is suggested that demonstrations of all skills, either by video or tutor modelling, be provided or sample lesson plans be distributed to pre-service teachers prior to teaching. Third, two of the pioneer researchers of microteaching, MacLcod & McIntyre (1977), support the use of models of master teachers demonstrating particular classroom strategies as an important part of microteaching. Feryok (2009), however, does suggest the importance of imitation to teacher development as pre-service teachers learned to use different tasks by successfully imitating the criteria of such tasks. Santiesteban and Koran Jr (1977) point to videotaped demonstrations being more effective than written transcripts of lessons, but others indicate no preference. Young & Young (1972) report that videotape models made in a classroom context were more effective in training teachers to recognise non-verbal behaviours, but that brief non-contextual lessons were better in addressing verbal behaviours.

3.4.5.2 Feedback

Feedback, in this study, can be understood as reactions or responses - written, visual, verbal or non-verbal, provided to pre-service teachers during or following their microteaching sessions by the instructor, their peers or the performing pre-service teacher himself/herself. Immediate accurate feedback about a particular teaching behaviour affects future performance of that behaviour (Levis, 1987). The positive effects of feedback can be attributed to reinforcement and confronting discrepancies between actual and desired performance. This confrontation is said to motivate the learner to change their behaviour and remove the discrepancy.

Much controversy exists on the role that microteaching plays in teacher training programmes but one thing is sure, pre-service teachers can receive multiple and divergent types of feedback from their microteaching experience. All this feedback must have some effect or influence on them. Kouritzin and Vizard (1999) state that most studies in teacher development compare feedback with assessment, referring specifically to formative and summative evaluation. They distinguish between assessment and feedback, with the former regarded as testing and measurement, and feedback as a "continuous, ongoing, and interactive" (p. 17) process that comes from multiple sources (self-evaluation, instructor, peers) and in a variety of forms (visual, written, oral) (Kouritzin and Vizard, 1999).

Certain types of feedback such as video feedback (Brent & Thomson, 1996), peer feedback (Rauch & Whittaker, 1999), supervisor feedback (Anderson, 1998), and self-evaluation (Kroll & LaBoskey, 1996) have indeed stimulated growth and change in pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers in training programmes are usually provided with multiple forms of feedback. These different types of feedback can be written (such as notes and checklists), oral (such as teacher-student conferences and peer discussion groups) and visual feedback. (Visual category encountered as video replay and on-line feedback). Feedback content is another important aspect as it can be formulated in the following forms: (a) praise for suitable performance, (b) a comment on the content aspects of the lesson, (c) a suggestion for improving classroom management and/or teaching by using a

different strategy, and (d) corrections of any mistake or omission of key points in their lesson (Anderson, 1998).

Structured feedback, if used, should demonstrate the desired ability based on certain criteria for achieving clarity. According to Cruickshank; Cruickshank et al. (1985; 1996), these criteria should determine the extent to which fellow peers acting as students understand the task, and as a result make instructional adjustments as appropriate. The planned activities allow time for peers to think about and respond to the use of examples, preparing peers for upcoming work and offering detailed feedback for the pre-service teacher concerning the instruction teaching of the teaching skill concerned. Structured feedback forms had the advantage of ensuring set criteria to be covered when giving feedback as well as their effectiveness as a record-keeping method. There were blank pages, which had the advantage of adaptability for giving personal and specific comments. Disadvantages associated with the structured feedback forms were related to their restrictive nature and the fact that the criteria were not skill specific for each lesson, also the time required to write appropriate comments and the fact that it may be possible to neglect areas needing comment. So it may be useful to widen the usage of this activity to be a departmental one (Singh & Narang, 2009) for enhancing the professional development of research participants. Legge and Asper (1972) found videotape replays in conjunction with highly structured self-evaluation forms produced more significant effects than not using self-evaluation forms.

The association of feedback and videotaping is often assumed within the context of microteaching but as Allen and Ryan (1969) point out, videotaping is not necessarily an essential component. The development of this technology in a relatively inexpensive and portable mode merely happened to coincide with the development of microteaching, so it was utilised as a major form of feedback. The concepts of reinforcement and feedback served to support its use. Perlberg (1988) discusses the use of the video for both research and training to be too great, to a degree that people could not conceive practising microteaching without video recordings. It is interesting to note that teacher educators in developing countries,

even in the most remote and underdeveloped areas, insisted on having video recorders. Koc, Peker, & Osmanoglu (2009) see the role of video feedback as a process of video self-confrontation and consider the feedback process, and in particular video feedback, as the heart of the microteaching experience. A similar emphasis was given to video self-confrontation processes, with some variations of emphasis, by Fuller and Manning (1973).

Self-confrontation or self-reinforcement processes through video replay appear to be consistent features of microteaching studies, reporting changes in behaviour. Borg (1972) and Francis (1997) report skill durability and transfer for many experienced teachers involved in a focussed self-confrontation video replay. Fuller and Manning (1973) caution self-confrontation techniques being both a help and a potential hazard because of serious disturbances these techniques can cause in the participants. Travers (1975) supports this point of view by indicating that people respond emotionally when they see themselves in a video replay, attending more to physical attributes than behaviours and the consequences of those behaviours. Perlberg (1988) also cautions against the use of such techniques by untrained people and suggests that this complexity and power is the cause for video self-confrontation not being accepted by most teacher educators using microteaching. However, MacLeod & McIntyre (1977) report that in their investigations participants were not preoccupied by physical appearances, and were in fact able to analyse their behaviours as teachers and the outcomes of those behaviours.

Research on the relative advantages of videotaping as opposed to audiotaping suggests little difference unless the target skills are of a non-verbal variety, in which case videotaping seems better (Allen, 1980; Copland, 1982). Fuller and Manning (1973), after comprehensively reviewing the literature on the use of videotape feedback in microteaching, suggest three conditions under which pre-service teachers gain maximum benefit: when the viewing population is young, attractive, verbal, intelligent, and successful; when there are no expectations for quick improvement in teaching (by both the supervisor and the pre-service teacher); and when feedback is unambiguous and related to predetermined performance goals.

If video is going to be used, it is crucial for pre-service teachers to be subjected to a video orientation to make them accustomed to and skilled in dealing with the role of video during the micro-sessions. This orientation will help pre-service teachers in various ways, such as by removing any fear the pre-service teacher has regarding their appearance before the video monitor, it will allow them to act before the video camera with self-confidence and thus profit from its use in microteaching, as videotaped recordings can, according to Schön (1988) encourage pre-service teachers to carefully test their values and strategies that underscore their classroom decisions and behaviour. Video orientation will also prevent the learner's attention from wandering and becoming focused on aspects other than practising the teaching skill concerned (Stanley, 1998).

Videotape feedback can be used for different purposes of assessment: performance assessment, interactional assessment or situational assessment. In performance assessment, feedback is aimed at increasing the pre-service teacher's cognisance of his strengths and defects. In interactional assessment, feedback concentrates on the interaction among participants as well as their performance. In situational assessment, feedback fuels the discussion employed to develop participants' understanding of the whole situation (Rosenstein, 2002). For this assessment to be effective, a "roving" camera can be utilised rather than a fixed one since the latter reinforces the role of the pre-service teacher as a knowledge giver and so that the special feature of video freeze-framing can help the pre-service teachers focus on every small detail on their video, including non-verbal signs. This feature is, according to Sonmez & Can (2010) considered important in teacher education as it focuses on the interaction of the discourse, not just passively watching it (Masats & Dooly, 2011; Orlova, 2009; Rich & Hannafin, 2009; Tripp & Rich, 2012). Jacques (2000) suggests that video playback has advantages which include alerting pre-service teachers to behaviours that they may fail to notice otherwise. Another advantage of video is the playback feature that can be used to initiate discussion among pre-service teachers concerning the interactions recorded. This is similar to what Kpanja (2001) explored in a study which examined the effect of videotaping on pre-service teachers' performance and found that the group that utilized video recordings in their discussion demonstrated significant

improvement over the other group that did not use it. However, Minardi (1999) offers a warning note about video-recording, regarding it as a valuable educational tool that must be used sensitively and requiring further research to evaluate its effectiveness. Finally, research in this area reported that pre-service teachers felt that they gained different insights from viewing videos, which are considered an effective feedback tool and a tool for knowledge construction, as they help learners determine whether they teach as they think they do or as they believe they should (Brodkey, 1992).

Another area briefly analysed in the literature is that of self-evaluation. There is also empirical evidence to suggest that self-analysis, supported by a self-evaluation guide to focus trainee attention, is a “viable alternative for feedback involving supervisor-led discussion for boosting the morale of a trainee faced with critical feedback” (Levis, 1987, p. 724). Legge and Asper (1972) studied the use of self-evaluation skills in conjunction with microteaching with very positive results. Ukovich and Pfeiffer (1980) examined supervisor and self-feedback. For subjects with high self-esteem, viewing their own video playback and completing a self-evaluation report was effective, while subjects with low self-esteem needed the supervisor's direct feedback.

3.4.5.3 Reflection

The most common tools employed for reflective teacher training programmes are diaries or journals, problem-solving simulations and reflective teaching itself. Wallace (1991) sees microteaching from this perspective, “as a technique for professional reflection rather than simply as a technique for shaping behaviour” (p. 95).

Different researchers point out the benefits of employing journals or diaries (Bailey, 1983; Bailey & Oschner, 1983; Brown, 1984; Long, 1982). Journals or diaries focus on an individual learner who is the object of study. They show personal variables and, of course, they constitute a tool to self-awareness, evaluation, and improvement. In other words, it is through self-observation and self-monitoring that a pre-service teacher can open the doors to his or her internal world and show the paths used to acquire the desired knowledge. Diaries or journals not only uncover a hidden realm of personal unique variables but provide developmental data as well, which can help us understand and augment our current knowledge of foreign language teaching (Bailey,1980; Long,1982) . These references to the benefits of using journals mentioned above are made about them in documentary language-learning experiences but these same ideas can be applied to the experiences of learning to teach. The other introspective method used for self-reflection in microteaching is stimulated-recall. Stimulated-recall takes place when the pre-service teachers are confronted again with their teaching session, which has been videotaped, and are asked to verbalize their thoughts.

Reflection is the process through which teachers can find meaning in what they do and can understand why they do it. According to Hole & McEntee (1999) reflection on the ordinary experiences of a teaching day is the life-force of teaching practice. Reflection can help pre-service teachers to think about and at the same time test their own practice (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). Also, they need to be trained on reflection throughout their teacher preparation programme (Serafini, 2002). Reflective teaching seems to be one of the newest trends in pre-service teaching and it has recently been playing a central role in different models of teacher development (Richards, 1998). The goal behind this is to prepare teachers to be more mindful about what they do and why they do it, and the consequences of their actions (Cruickshank & Metcalf, 1993). The idea is to introspect and analyze one's teaching to see in what ways it can be enhanced and move pre-service teachers beyond a level where they are guided largely by “impulse, intuition, and routine” (Richards, 1998, p. 21). Theory and practice stand on equal footing in the present study. Instead of being in conflict, they actually feedback into one another

and it is that cyclical relationship between theory and practice that helps pre-service teachers develop as reflective practitioners.

It is even wiser if pre-service teachers are prepared to utilize reflection as part of their daily practice because this helps the university lecturers' commitment to support pre-service teachers to clarify and refine their personal theories and to provide ways to negotiate these theories to guide and accommodate change (Mohamed, 2006). Thus, prospective teachers would be able to confront their own rigid beliefs and guide a process of conceptual change eventually leading to the development of more successful teachers. (Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005)(Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005) Motivating pre-service teachers to apply new course strategies could be difficult but obtaining pre-service teacher feedback gives teachers insights that help them understand the learning environment for their professional development (Chawl & Thukral, 2011; Richardson, 2005).

Lack of time is a central reason that teachers are unable to develop the habit of reflection in general (Smith & Hatton, 1993). Nevertheless, the long list of obstacles and problems should not discourage practitioners willing to make change in their practice and enhance their professional performance, as the options reflection offers are unlimited and may be the suitable solution for a number of education problems. It is expected that getting acquainted with and used to this practice over time would develop the habit of thinking about our own work and therefore manage to go beyond the problems and enable us to gain advantages. In this age of accountability, the ability of teachers to evaluate themselves is becoming crucial (Doff, 1988) and in order for reflectivity on teaching to succeed, it should be nurtured through microteaching in a supportive on-campus clinical setting (Pultorak, 1996).

3.4.5.4 Acquisition and transfer of skills

Microteaching as a training technique is based on two assumptions: the first is that the skills passed on in training will be more proficiently acquired, and the second is that microteaching has a direct influence on the teaching behaviours used in the natural classroom (Wiles, 2005). Copeland, (1982) cites findings that support the first assumption that microteaching increases the initial acquisition of target skills. Evidence for the second assumption is much less substantial. Most studies in the area of transfer of skills acquired in the course have found, with inexperienced teachers, no benefits of microteaching over other more conventional methods (Copeland, 1975). Only Borg (1972) was able to establish any long term gains from skills training in a microteaching situation and transfer to the classroom, and this was with experienced teachers. MacLeod (1977) question the validity of Borg's findings and suggests that several interpretations of the results are possible. Copeland (1975) reported benefits only for those whose classroom supervisor had been trained in supervision of the model skill, or who were placed in a classroom where the environment was conducive to the development of the particular skills.

At its start, the goal of microteaching was simply to teach pre-service teachers to imitate discrete skills modelled by instructors. The use of microteaching has currently shifted from the previous limited focus to encompass giving pre-service teachers an all-inclusive teaching experience. Teaching whole lessons, though in a scaled-down form, has necessitated pre-service teachers' analysis of their teaching actions (Ram Babu, 2007; Sharma & Joshi, 2006). Also, data analysis shows that it is very difficult to determine whether skill acquisition is the same as skill performance. Does non-performance of a skill in the regular classroom indicate that the skill has not been acquired? It is quite possible that many other variables have intervened such as the usual pattern of the teaching-learning process in the sessions, time, the pre-service teachers/lecturers' relationship, or the pre-service teacher's perceptions of what it means to be a teacher.

The transfer of learned knowledge and skills is an essential goal of education (Marini & Genereux, 1995). In addition, however, to achieve this goal, a joint training is also strongly needed for those who are working with pre-service teachers in their preparation programme. Singley & Anderson (1989) have shown that transfer depends on the degree to which tasks share identical productions. As a result, when pre-service teachers practise their teaching in practicum where the supervisor used the same skills being addressed in the microteaching programme, then pre-service teacher would experience success. If this is so, there are implications for teacher educators using microteaching programmes based on the development of specific skills (Butler, 2001). There needs to be some correlation between the microteaching laboratory or on-campus component and the field experience component of the course (Cornford, 1991b; De Corte, 1999; Yang, 2012).

Klinzing (2002) argued that the use of microteaching could contribute to positive long-term effects in pre-service teachers' behaviour and in the transfer into professional teaching performance, as its concerns with training pre-service teachers in the use of specific teaching skills was mainly grounded on two assumptions: first, microteaching raises the probability that skills will be proficiently gained quickly. Second, microteaching has a direct influence on the teaching behaviours used in the natural classroom.

3.4.5.5 Teaching Skills

Teaching is a set of interrelated activities a teacher performs in classroom to facilitate learning. Teaching activities can be analysed in terms of teacher behaviours that can be considered as a set of observable activities which are such as are introducing, illustrating, and questioning, which may be described as teaching skills (Kyriacou, 1998; Wragg, 2005). So, the teaching skills are those interrelated activities of teaching which aim at bringing about desired changes in students. This concept of teaching skills has emerged with the advent of microteaching (Allen & Ryan, 1969; Cornford, 1991a; Dwinght & Weiping, 2007; MacLcod & McIntyre, 1977; McGarvey & Swallow, 1986). Therefore, it is widely recognised that the major contribution of microteaching to the present-day teacher

education programmes is teaching skills. The following definition is very useful in order to know the significance of teaching skills: a teaching skill is an activity of teaching behaviour of a teacher, used to teach effectively and successfully. A systematic review of literature reveals that a large number of teaching skills have been identified by various researchers. The first attempt made in this regard, at the Stanford University in USA by Allen and Ryans (1969) cited in Mukalel (2007) suggests fourteen teaching skills: set induction, stimulus variation, lecturing, silence and non-verbal cues, reinforcing student participation, recognising behaviour, completing the communication, fluency in questioning, probing questioning, divergent questions, higher order questions, illustrating and use of examples, planned repetition and closure. Agarwal (1999) defines component teaching skills associated with different stages of lessons. Ram Babu (2007) has identified the following teaching skills: writing instructional objectives, selection and preparation of teaching aids, introducing a lesson, reinforcement, demonstration, stimulus variation, illustrating with examples, use of blackboard, explaining, fluency of questioning, probing questioning, closure, use of teaching aids, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

As discussed earlier, the inclusion of discrete and specific skills to be acquired and practised in a microteaching situation is based on the assumption that before attempting complicated tasks of teaching, teachers need to master the component skills (McKnight 1980). Gregory (1986) also points out that emphasis on these skills ends to suggest one kind of teaching approach: teacher-dominated whole-class. He suspects the validity of the skills often addressed in microteaching programmes: the skills that are included in any microteaching programme greatly depend on the educator's opinion about the skills that contribute to good teaching. Therefore, not all aspects of the teaching and learning process are likely to be included. Those skills that are included in microteaching often tend to be partial, minute and technical in orientation.

Allen (1980), one of the original developers, questions the discrete and minute competencies or skills often addressed in microteaching but argues that pre-service teachers not only have to be trained in the ordinary teaching skills, but

also, they need new kinds of skills such as those related to student self-esteem, remediation, student participation, improvisation, as well as the more technical type of teaching-learning skills or competencies. Cornford (1991a) contends that a micro skill approach addressing discrete compartmentalisation of skills such as questioning, explaining, reinforcement, and variability, does not provide the context within which teachers usually make decisions. He supports a macro skill approach based on teacher decision-making elements. The practice of integrating a microteaching programme into the ongoing teacher training programmes in the early experimental days at Stanford tended to become less evident in later microteaching studies; it was a practice strongly disapproved by McKnight (1980). Gregory (1986) and Gurvitch & Metzler (2009) suggest that microteaching's fullest potential is realized when integrated with other related courses. This integration provides a context for decision-making about the suitability of teaching techniques for various aims and objectives. It is often assumed that these decision-making skills are possessed by experienced teachers (Karçkay & Sanlı, 2009).

3.4.5.6 Peer-Group Teaching

Although peer teaching seems to have become the dominant form of the microteaching class, Allen (1980) states that wisdom of experience would suggest that real students would be preferential in most settings. This is supported by Metzler (1984) who suggests that micro-peer teaching with pre-service teacher training can only be considered a "good alternative" to experiences with real students. Allen and Ryan (1969) point out the importance of teaching the same type of students the pre-service teacher will eventually teach. McIntyre, Macleod & Griffiths (1977) in their research found that there are no significant differences between pre-service teachers' peers and school students in some particular teaching skills. Therefore, it may be that the advantages of a number of peers participating as members of the "class" outweigh the one with a group of school-age students.

Although pre-service teachers favour teaching in the course to real students rather than to their peers, they seem unconscious of the following issues which, according to Kieviet (1972) are: first, teaching to real students does not help develop pre-

service teachers' performance like their fellow peers who give more answers and open challenging discussions regarding the teaching skill practised that would seem useful to the presenter of the micro-lesson. Second, following teaching, these fellow peers can in turn give feedback, thus adding another important dimension to their presence in the course.

EKŞİ (2012) argues that acting as pupils in the microteaching sessions provides teacher trainees with valuable perceptions and ideas about the teaching skills practised in the course both when they observe and when being observed. Feedback by peers can be more specific and very helpful because trainee teachers are all experiencing the same kind of problems, adding that it can be a low-threat situation because there are no real students involved (Clifford, Jorstad, & Lange, 1977; EKŞİ, 2012; Meerah & Halim, 2011).

To put themselves in the student's position is a very important role because the more sincerity with which a student teacher performs his role, the more successfully his peers will act as teachers. It is necessary that the pre-service teachers who act sometimes as a teacher and at other times as a student be informed of some guidelines that help them perform these two roles, before the beginning of the micro-lesson. This training also should include sufficient opportunities for pre-service teachers to reason when performing as students, in order to contribute to the development of their fellow micro-teacher's performance. This can be achieved by well-planned and developed activities on the part of the lecturer. This is in line with Copeland (1982) who indicates that with initial performances of a skill, peers as students may help trainees because they feel more comfortable with or can elicit more empathy from them, whereas the use of school students may be more advantageous when considering transfer of the skill to the natural classroom. On the other hand, microteaching as a teacher training method involves not only such performances of identity, but it can also be analysed as a type of theatrical performance as multiple frames are shifting and overlapping from moment to moment during the microteaching activities.

At the end of this section about the microteaching components, review of the literature shows that as experience with microteaching and its conceptualisation grew, there have been and still are many forms of microteaching in terms of the combinations of its components. One of the constant findings from the research is that the participants seem to enjoy microteaching and consider it valuable. Microteaching programmes vary widely according to the contexts within which they run therefore the most benefit to be attained for pre-service teachers is by investigating the programmes they currently undertake with a view to future change and improvement.

3.4.6 Role of the Supervisor in Microteaching

Perlberg, Robert and Richard (1967) indicated that the role of supervision in microteaching was not given due consideration, pointing to Allen and Ryan's original concept of supervision as "staying one step ahead of the trainee" (Allen and Ryan, 1969). Studies cited in Copeland (1982) suggest that the presence of a supervisor enhances training effects. To follow the ideas of Fuller and Manning (1973) though, indications are that supervision in microteaching is more complex than Allen and his colleagues originally thought. It may be that supervisors could do much harm to the learning process as well as good, so their professional preparation becomes very important in this light (Perlberg et al., 1967).

The microteaching supervisor is essentially a teacher whose role is to increase and refine performance of the skills that serve as the objectives (Sharma, 1992). The responsibilities of the supervisor in microteaching are mentioned here under the following points: first, the supervisor should help the trainee develop the ability to perform a skill. The supervisor with this role can help the pre-service teacher in the refinement of the skill and reinforce his performance of it. Second, the supervisor could help the trainee to understand where the skill should be applied. Having a repertoire of reinforcement skills does not ensure good classroom application. Good performance depends on when and where the skills are used. The supervisor, therefore, must help the trainee in making professional decisions. Third, each supervisor is assigned between six to ten pre-service teachers at the start of the session in microteaching and he works with this group. Fourth, after

special arrangements, the supervisor visits the trainee teachers in the schools and prepares a special schedule of microteaching lessons in the participating schools, giving trainee teachers the chance for discussion after the lesson. Fifth, the supervisor supervises the lesson taking notes of the improvements which are to be made by the trainee teacher in the presentation of the lesson; and finally, the supervisor evaluates the lesson and gives feedback (Dwight & Weiping, 2007; Harichandan, 2010; Lakshmi & Rao, 2009; Sharma & Joshi, 2006).

A supervisor plays a leading role in microteaching by assisting pre-service teachers in relating the component skills of teaching both to the theory underlying the skills and to practical classroom situations (Agarwal, 1999). The supervisor has to provide continuous consultation to help the pre-service teacher transfer the skill learnt in a microteaching setting to the actual classroom. Moreover, the supervisor demonstrates a particular skill, prepares a special schedule of microteaching lessons in the participating schools, supervises the lesson, discusses with the pre-service teacher in a group of other pre-service teachers, completes the evaluation schedule, and gives feedback (Vare, 1994; Winitzky & Arends, 1991). To sum up, the supervisor is expected to work hard to be a model for the pre-service teachers.

3.4.7 Criticism of Microteaching

Microteaching may be described as an effective and controlled device of learning the art of teaching (Ram Babu, 2007). Although there are many advantages to microteaching, it is not free from criticism. It is generally argued that microteaching presents a fragmented view of teaching which may enable pre-service teachers to master the isolated teaching skills but hardly trains them to meet the needs of the real teacher encounter as teaching is not just a summation of teaching skills. Teaching cannot be broken down into sub-components as they lose meaning in isolation and teaching is not a combination of these isolated parts (Kumar, 2004; Usha, 1997). The artificial nature of the micro-teaching context is also criticised for not being sufficiently comparable to the classroom for the transfer of skill development (Ananthkrishan, 2008). In a practice class of five to ten students, the trainee teachers may not have any difficulty, and may gain a lot of confidence. But in a class of fifty or more, they may fail to teach and don't know

what to do. Other critics of microteaching claim that while teaching a micro-class the teacher does not encounter the management problems common in large classes (Agarwal, 1999). The other problems that make microteaching an artificial context are the availability of real pupils, space for conducting the micro-teaching programme, and supervision of micro-lessons (Sharma, 1992). Another critique for microteaching is a financial one as the microteaching lab is very expensive; it requires video recorders and other resources to make the micro-lesson effective (Sharma, 1992). To sum up, despite some of these criticisms, micro-teaching has an important role in improving teaching skills. Microteaching is not a substitute for any other teaching method, but it is a supplement to other methods and it depends a lot on awareness of the purpose of the microteaching and the teacher's motivation to improve his ability and teaching skills (Ananthakrishan, 2008).

3.5 Introducing Microteaching into EFL Pre-service Teachers' Preparation Programme in Menoufia University

During their preparation course in the English department at the Faculty of Education, EFL pre-service teachers are introduced to two EFL Methodology courses to help them understand how EFL theories and beliefs can be put into practice. Methodology I aims at orienting pre-service teachers to the main EFL trends and development by giving them the necessary knowledge of the EFL theories in teaching and learning, so they can benefit from such knowledge when they begin their teaching profession. The purpose of Methodology II is to enhance students' understanding of the EFL principles and practices, concentrating more on Communicative Language Teaching in addition to the receptive and the productive language skills. Both methodology courses and other courses of the preparation programme only focus on the theoretical aspects of teaching and not the practical one. Thus, the microteaching course can provide that missing platform to put their peers, give and receive feedback, think differently and interact (J. Benton-Kupper, 2001; Fernández & Robinson, 2006; Gee, 1992). Because this study aims at developing the teaching performance of pre-service English teachers, the next section focuses on their teaching performance.

3.5.1 Teaching Performance Defined

In the present study teaching performance is used to mean what the pre-service teachers are practising to create the appropriate conditions for language learning in the classroom, through their ability to make and implement a set of theoretical as well as practically motivated teaching decisions concerning their professional attributes and knowledge. Teaching performance is doing a lesson in a certain way that makes the teacher relate the lesson to learners' social reality, using various teaching methods and suitable teaching aids, relating the lesson to students' daily problems and deepening teachers' own knowledge in the lesson subject beyond what is mentioned in students' book (Kilc, 2010). Demand for improving public schools and teacher preparation programmes at institutions of higher education and through a continuing process of development and research, the Centre for the Development of English Language Teaching (CDELTA) has integrated information about instructional principles to develop Egyptian standards for teachers graduating from pre-service English teacher education programmes (STEP). From the above discussion, it could be concluded that qualified teachers need to meet a certain number of standards (Herman, 2004; Serafini, 2002) that cannot be reached by reading about them but only by continuous practice through microteaching and in the field.

3.5.2 Microteaching Goals in the Faculties of Education

Realizing the importance of providing practice to its students, the Faculty of Education at Menoufia University introduced this compulsory course for all second year pre-service teachers to prepare them before beginning their practicum in their third year. Mehndirata (2007), and Ram Babu (2007) agree that the objectives of introducing microteaching in Faculties of Education are as follows: (a) landing the novice teachers gradually in the real classroom after gaining enough confidence; (b) imparting intensive training in the component skills of teaching to the pre-service teachers at pre-service level; (c) utilizing the available material, money and time to the maximum; (d) providing required feedback; (e) developing confidence in teaching; (f) identifying the deficiencies of trainees to give immediate feedback and help them to modify their teaching behaviours and to demonstrate the same in re-teaching a class in another micro-situation; (g)

developing experimental teacher education programmes and encouraging research identifying new teaching skills; and (h) improving teaching effectiveness through increased control of instructional practice and supervision.

The next section deals with the characteristics of educational change, curriculum implementation, and the research conceptual framework and questions.

3.6 Educational Change

The work of Lewin (1948) serves as the basis for educational change theory. Lewin believed that people must let go of old information in order to accept new information (Wirth, 2004). Lewin believed the process was a painful one in that persons needed to release information and notions which had been embedded in their thinking and learning. A few years after, Lewin (1951) began to develop field theory, which claimed that individuals exist in lives in which driving or restraining forces work (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Driving forces are those which push a situation in a particular direction. They start change and keep that change continuing. Restricting forces work to prevent the driving forces from moving forward and a person is more likely to change when the restraining forces can be removed (Schein, 2002).

Fullan (2001) built his theory on the work of Lewin, indicating that the key to successful change centres upon relationships, not just a mere application of top-down reform. Both Lewin (1948, 1951) and Fullan (2001, 2004, 2005) provided a theoretical framework for understanding educational change and the role it plays in teacher education programmes. Equally as important as educational change is the need to respect the participants who are being involved in an innovation. Although Fullan's focus was on the stakeholders within a school setting, O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) focused on the school as a unique entity that has a shared focus.

Fullan (1991) emphasized that a change in practice is crucial for educational reform to occur. Fullan considered three main phases of educational change; that is initiation, implementation and continuation. The first phase of initiation is talking

about the choice of the new course and the decision to start the process of change. Then, implementation which usually happens in the first two or three years of usage includes the first reactions and experiences of trying to practise the new course. The final stage of continuation shows the result of implementing the curriculum and if it will be an essential part of the programme or not. Viewing reform as multidimensional, Fullan (1991, p.38) refers to elements to consider when implementing innovations such as “using new material and teaching strategies as well as existing possibility of beliefs’ change”. The significant element of this dimension, according to Fullan (1991), was the realization that skill acquisition took time, thus clarifying the importance of continuous staff development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Connecting his change paradigm to moral purpose, Fullan (1993, p. 39) highlighted his contention that “every teacher plays an important role in the change process as well as the experts”.

There are many theories of investigating educational change and examining a new course implementation, however Fullan’s theoretical framework was the most relevant in structuring this research for the following reasons: first, the relevance of the current research to teachers’ practice was one of the characteristics of change as described by Fullan (1991). Second, this framework provides a medium to investigate the dynamics of change, a medium which confirms that “individual teachers’ learning during the implementation of an educational mandate provides effective changes within schools,” and requires, as Darling-Hammond (1990, p. 240) contended, “a commitment as of time and support to help pre-service teachers, as change-agents, in their efforts to reconstruct their new ways of thinking”. This commitment is at the heart of the change process’ success as those participating in the change have to understand the new ideas which “underscore the reform” Fullan (1991, p.2). Finally, in his framework, there is a link between curriculum implementation and teachers’ professional development that is the main aim of teachers’ preparation programmes in Egypt.

I focused on the implementation phase as it is, first, directly related to the purpose of the study. Second, the implementation phase, according to Fullan (2007) is very

important for change to be undertaken as it involves the ways of accomplishing the planned objectives that have been discussed and agreed upon during the first phase of curriculum change. Finally, the implementation phase determines the successfulness or the failure of the new change as it involves the factors affecting the dynamic nature of the change process. These critical factors are, according to Fullan (2007, p. 87), “structured into three categories” that are related to the change’s characteristics. Much attention has been given to enhancing teachers’ performance as an important component of any educational change in recent years (Fullan, 2007). Many attempts have been made in the field of educational research (Olsen & Sexton, 2009), that proved educational change implementation to be its own driving force (Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Fullan & York, 2007; Theriot & Tice, 2009). Fullan’s theoretical framework of educational change is the basis that guides the research structure to answer its questions. The next part will explain curriculum implementation in some detail by trying to describe the curriculum implementation process and how it relates to educational change.

3.7 Curriculum Implementation Process

According to Breen (1980), a curriculum is planned and designed for the purpose of answering three interconnected inquiries; about the content that is to be learned, the ways used to achieve learning, and to what extent is the content suitable and, later, productive. Curriculum according to Snyder, et al. (1992, p. 427) can include “a new program, a study course, or even a collection of teacher plans”. Fullan & Pomfret (1977, p. 336) defined curriculum implementation to be “the real usage of a new programme or a course in practice”.

According to Snyder, et al. (1992), there are three approaches to curriculum implementation: fidelity, mutual adaptation, and curriculum enactment. These approaches are utilised as themes to explore research participants’ perspectives of the focuses, difficulties, and relevance of the microteaching course in order to obtain an accurate picture. The fidelity approach aims at identifying the degree of course implementation in comparison with its planned use (Snyder et al., 1992). Based on the mutual adaptation approach, the course implementation is affected by many factors such as school culture, or participants’ previous knowledge and

beliefs, as implementation is “a process of mutual adaptation in which course goals and methods are adapted to suit the pre-service teachers’ needs to meet the course’s requirements”; (McLaughlin, 2004, p. 172) bearing in mind the context in which the new course is implemented and the support needed for that implementation. Therefore, an in-depth data surgery to examine the factors affecting the microteaching course is undergone. According to Snyder, et al., (1992), it is not possible to implement a curriculum in a typical or prescribed way as actual implementation is affected by many factors: cultural, social, situational, or political. The third theme, approaching a curriculum from an enactment perspective, requires exploring educational experiences mutually created by pre-service teachers and their lecturers (Snyder, et al. 1992).

The first factor related to curriculum implementation involves the characteristics of change, which includes, according to Fullan’s theory, need, clarity, complexity and practicality, as the implementers must first see a need for change in a given context. For example, if lecturers are not aware of the importance of change to their pre-service teachers, then implementation of a new course will be hard. The next characteristic is clarity which is relevant to the lecturers’ perception of the new course and how it should be implemented. This is why in curricular change, a clarity of objectives and strategies is a fundamental requirement. The third characteristic is complexity which refers to the difficulty of change, the skills needed, the extent of beliefs’ adjustments, teaching strategies, and the usage of materials (Fullan, 2007). The last characteristic is practicality which refers to the three previous factors of change altogether as it is associated with the readiness and the ability to make the change.

The second category of factors that impacts curriculum implementation are local factors which refer to the social aspects of change; the setting in which lecturers work; and the activities whether planned or unplanned that according to Fullan (2007, p. 93) affect “the productivity of change”. Local factors in Fullan’s model involve the teacher, the school, the principal and the community. The last set of factors that affect implementation is the external factors which connect the school in the context of its wider society (Fullan, 2007) because first, the relationships

between schools and government agencies are very important. Second, external governmental partners such as development centres and educational agencies have a powerful role in supporting curriculum implementation. Thus, many factors need to be aligned together for implementation of a new curriculum to be a success and continuing the process can be challenging as well.

Menoufia University, as part of an educational reform, decided to introduce the new microteaching course to its EFL pre-service teachers' preparation programme. This requires pre-service teachers of English and their lecturers to try the new course with all its components and activities. As has been discussed, implementing a new curriculum is not that simple; it is as Fullan (2007) confirmed a complex social process of turning a new curriculum change into a life with all its interrelationships created among those who are implementing it and those who are trying it in their special context. So the aim of this study is to look into the nature and content of the new microteaching course from the perspectives of research participants, and in order to describe the focuses of the course, which was in its second year of implementation at the time of this research, it is necessary to grasp how pre-service teachers and their lecturers conceptualize and utilize their experiences of formal teacher education programmes, as well as of their teaching practice (Freeman & Richards, 1996).

3.8 Research Conceptual Framework

Based on Fullan's framework of educational change and to give Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers a voice, the present study followed the three curriculum implementation perspectives by, first exploring the current implementation of the microteaching course, namely: focuses or skills practised in the course, difficulties participants encounter during the course implementation and how helpful was the course in improving pre-service teachers' teaching performance in practicum. After this, the factors that negatively or positively, affect its implementation in an EFL Egyptian context were closely investigated; and finally, the study provides a proposed model for the course application in Egypt. The following figure 3.1 clarifies the three perspectives:

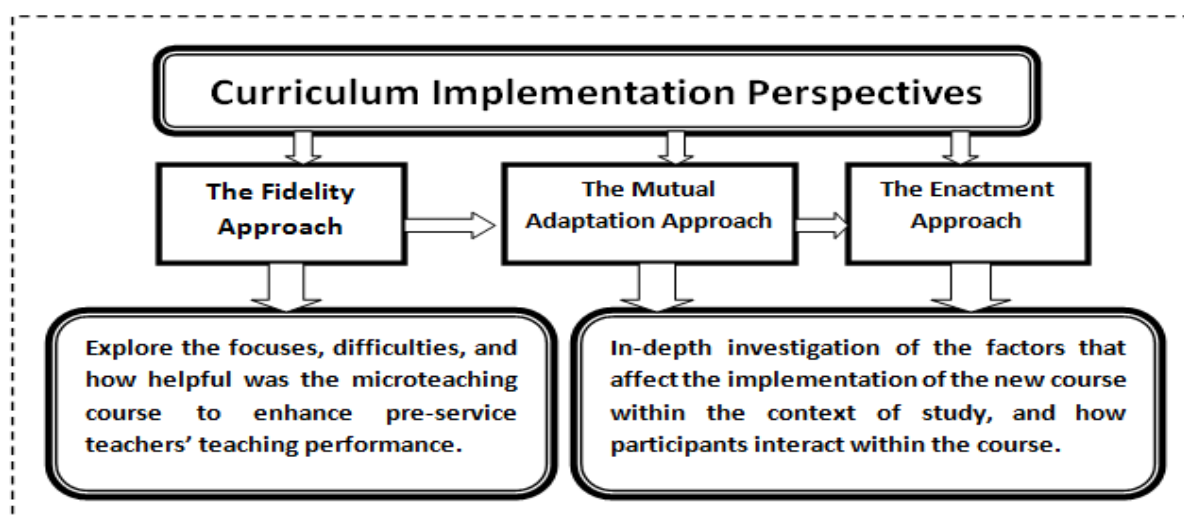


Figure 3.1 Curriculum implementation perspectives as followed by the researcher

3.9 Research Questions

This study examines, then, the components of a microteaching programme as perceived by those involved in the programme. The components are those outlined in the literature: overall gains, skills, feedback, videotaping, and self-evaluation. The helpfulness of the course in developing teaching skills for use in the natural classroom has been addressed by gathering perceptions rather than any count of performance demonstrations. The study contributes to knowledge in this field by providing a closer look at the implementation of microteaching in the wider context of TEFL education, not just in Egypt. It will also facilitate better performance of both lecturers and pre-service teachers in their microteaching course and improve English language teacher education in Egypt for the following facts; 1) no research, to the researcher's knowledge, has been carried out which has investigated how EFL teaching competence is developed by microteaching in the Egyptian setting of Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education; 2) as far as the researcher knows, no research has been carried out specifically within an EFL teacher education programme using the interpretative critical inquiry based approach.

Taking into account research aims, the questions of the study are as follows:

- What are the focuses of the microteaching course from the pre-service teachers' and lecturers' perspectives?
- What difficulties are encountered by Egyptian university lecturers and their pre-service teachers in the microteaching course?
- How helpful is the microteaching course from the Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perspectives in enhancing their teaching performance in schools?

Chapter Three traced the development of EFL teacher education, EFL pre-service teachers' preparation programmes and microteaching research. The next chapter is devoted to an outline of the methodology of the current study. It addresses the ontological assumptions and the epistemological stance underpinning the current study.

Chapter Four

Methodology and Design

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter introduces the methodology of the research. It starts by presenting the research paradigm, followed by a rationale for adopting this paradigm in the study by clarifying the three main propositions: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Then the research methodology is explained, including the design and administration of the methods through the fieldwork processes, as well as highlighting the constraints affecting the fieldwork procedures. Then, the chapter highlights the ethical considerations that were followed during the research process. The chapter ends with the data management procedures and ways of maximising the quality of the research design.

4.2 Research paradigm

It is really important that qualitative researchers clarify their research paradigm, which according to Guba (1990, p.17) is: "the fundamental set of beliefs that directs action". Identifying the research paradigm in advance guides the researcher's critical decisions concerning research context, the relationship between researchers and their participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and how findings are discussed. The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers of the new microteaching course. Therefore, the researcher employed interpretivism as the study's research paradigm as it is, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), a study that uses qualitative data to develop theory by understanding the perspectives of the participants involved. I can argue here that the interpretive paradigm is a good option for this research as it is a study that takes place in a natural context, depends on data in addition to the interaction with study participants, and uses multiple humanistic and interactive methods (Cresswell, 2007). In this study, the interpretive paradigm is to help me explain why things happened from the insider's viewpoint (Maxwell, 1996).

Based on the above argument, the interpretive mode of inquiry seems pertinent since the study aims to come to grips with three kinds of social reality. The first is the pre-service teachers' and their lecturers' subjective endeavour to perceive the microteaching course. This necessitates gaining insight into their perception by understanding how pre-service teachers and their lecturers see themselves and their abilities and how they understand the focuses of the microteaching course. The second is the difficulties they encountered during the course. The third is the pre-service teachers' perceptions of how helpful the course was in developing their teaching performance at practicum. It should be noted that the realities stated above are socially constructed and there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

4.3 Research Epistemology: Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is an epistemological perspective which posits that what is known to be real is a product of a particular culture and historical moment. Social constructionism possesses an interactive consensus that views people and organizations as continuing constructions and takes into account the meaning-making process that exists between them (Hosking, 1999) and that researchers' involvement with participants in conversations plays a powerful role on the study's outcomes. This view asserts that one's mind plays a role in the acquisition and processing of sensory input, and that personal mental representations of reality are thereby constructed (Von Glasersfeld, 1995). Furthermore, these constructs may be used to anticipate actions external to an observer, and to choose a response from among alternatives potentially appropriate to the circumstance (Adams & Krockover, 1997) and that social interaction which is an important source of knowledge construction must also be considered (Nola & Irzik, 2005).

Social constructionism holds that learning is an active process of meaning-making by interaction with those around us. Pre-service teachers, through the microteaching sessions, are intimately engaged in this process by various assigned activities: role-playing, self-reflection and reflection on the actions of others, and critiques of the efforts of others. Therefore, while pre-service

teachers come to the course with extensive personal knowledge, this knowledge may undergo modification by means of social interactions as they are refined in order to better fit with perceived reality. In the same way, prior beliefs may be challenged and possibly also be subject to alteration. Learning is contextually based, which means that different contexts facilitate different types of knowledge construction (Cobern, 1991; Wheatley, 1991). This contextually constructed knowledge may be individually (Grandy, 1998; Kahveci & Ay, 2008) or socially constructed (Tobin & Tippins, 1993). This contextual dependence facilitates interactions within the microteaching course with the lecturer as well as the pre-service teachers, and theoretically facilitates the social construction of knowledge.

In this sense, investigating the social world of the pre-service teachers inside the EFL classroom as distinct would reflect the EFL pre-service teachers' definitions of the nature of language learning in general, and microteaching in particular. It gives them the chance to clarify what they believe in, aspire to, and seek to achieve. Moreover, it gives them the chance to explicate their behaviours and the reasons for this. This study is a kind of interpretive research, since one of its objectives is to interpret how pre-service teachers perceive the new microteaching course. Also, as a staff member, such information can be used to further facilitate EFL teaching/learning through improved microteaching experiences and to suggest implications for the planning and design of the microteaching curriculum.

4.4 Research Methodology

Choosing a research methodology was the next step after identifying the research paradigm and in order to assure the alignment of research questions, theory, and methodology, I used Seliger and Shohamy's (1989, p. 24) "meta-theoretical framework" that is employed to help capture and explain the salient methodological attributes of the present study.

In this framework, language is seen synthetically and this study situates language as a mediator of two discrete though interrelated fields of human activity: (i)

language as it is used to facilitate communication and to create spaces for the maintenance of social relationships among members of any given knowledge community as among pre-service teachers, lecturers and the whole educational community around them at practicum and in the faculty of education, and (ii) language as a tool which mediates thought processes and regulates the conceptual reasoning and reflective capabilities of speakers (Hassan, 2005; Lantolf & Poehner, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). Also, the aim of the research is to investigate and record a particular context of foreign language learning, namely to discover patterns of teaching and learning EFL within a unique educational setting in order to suggest implications leading to the improvement of EFL teaching and learning within a microteaching course. Figure 4.1 illustrates the conceptual and operational levels on which this research is based.

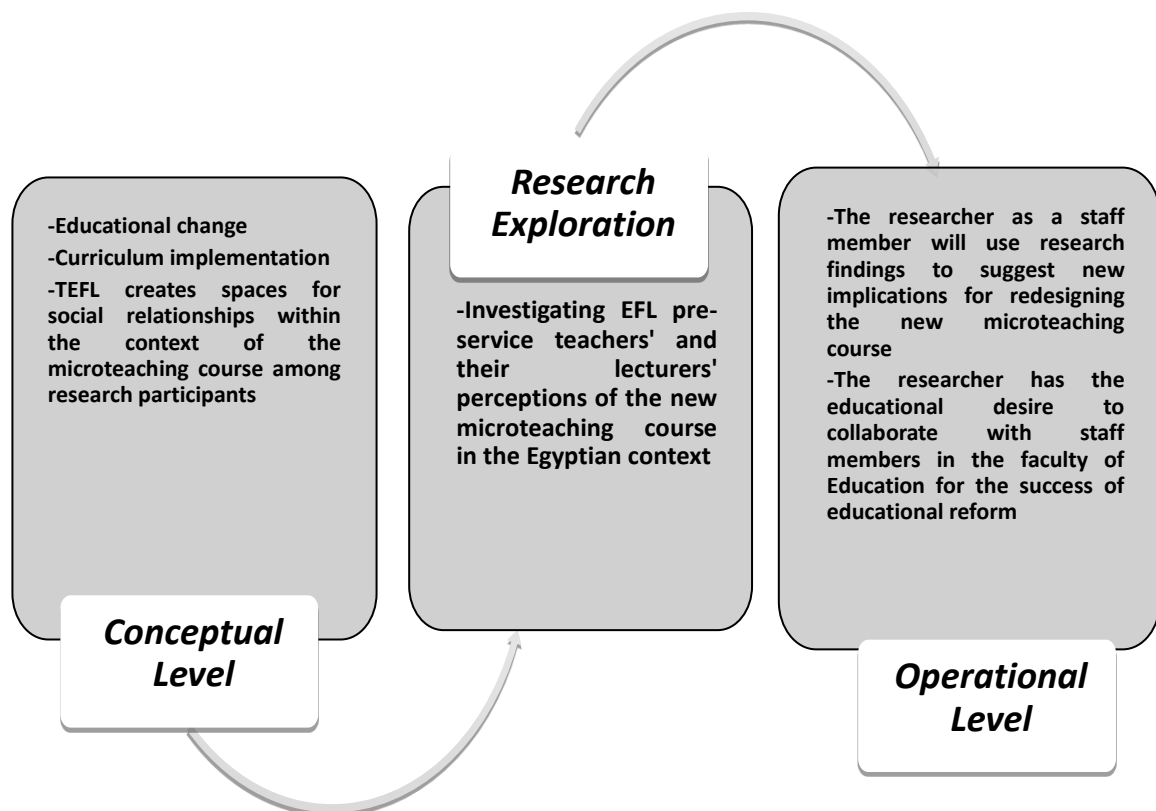


Figure 4.1 Conceptual and operational levels of the study

The important point to be made here is that each level is to be seen as interdependent. In other words, decisions within one level have effects on the types of decisions made within other levels. Specifically, decisions at the

conceptual level about how the focus of research is understood and what the objective of the research is to be, will have direct implications for decisions made at the operational level of research in terms of the approach used and in the design of how data are defined, collected, analysed and interpreted. Smagorinsky Smagorinsky (1995) stresses that data are socially created by the relationships among the researcher, participants, research context, and by data collection methods. It is supposed that learning which can be studied away from its social context is considered an underestimation to “the role of mediation” and its effects in human development (1995, p. 204).

Because each person’s viewpoint, traditions, culture, and background are different, it is impossible for any specific methodology to suffice in every situation. In this section, I argue for the appropriateness of the methodology selected within this study’s context. The research’s questions informed my choices, which in turn suggested appropriate data collection methods. In addition, this refined the thinking about each component in dialogue with the others as the study progressed.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Akker, Gravemeijer, Mckenney, & Nieveen (2007) assure that in social sciences, it is important to focus on the research problem and the use of more than one approach to obtain knowledge about that problem. Mixed methods, because of their disposition towards the use of holistic data gathering techniques, are seen as complementing the research framework as well as contributing to a comprehensive and appropriate analysis of the data.

The element of generalisability of findings to a wider context has never been a goal of naturalistic inquiry. However, the in-depth nature of inquiry means the findings give insightful explanations of phenomena, which could be useful to the people in similar situations (Lichtman, 2006). It was felt that the mixed-methodology design with multiple methods of research used would ensure greater contextualisation, dependability and trustworthiness for the research on EFL teaching and learning.

According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011, p. 69), “there are four major mixed methods designs: the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, and the embedded design”. In the convergent parallel design, the researcher uses concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative parts during the same phase of the research process. The embedded design occurs when the researcher collects and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data within a traditional quantitative or qualitative design by adding a qualitative part within a quantitative design (Cresswell, 2007).

The exploratory sequential design is implemented in two distinct interactive phases. According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), it starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data. This phase is followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. The second qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from the results of the first, quantitative phase. The researcher interprets how the qualitative results help to explain the initial quantitative results. In contrast to the explanatory design, the exploratory design starts with the collection and analysis of the qualitative data in the first phase. “Building from the exploratory results, the researcher conducts a second, quantitative phase to test or generalize the research initial findings.” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 71)

The proposed study follows a sequential mixed-method exploratory design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) because the researcher first conducted the quantitative phase of the research, then the qualitative one; this allows the researcher to present the paradigm assumptions behind each phase in detail (Cresswell, 2007). The quantitative phase is represented by the questionnaire, whereas the semi-structured interviews and reflective journal constitute the qualitative phase. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis could be administered in an integrated way to build a solid base for the argumentation about the themes emerging from the data and how they sustain or refute the quantitative analysis.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

The study aims to investigate the perceptions of Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers of the focuses, difficulties and the helpfulness of the microteaching course. A number of methods have been developed for such an investigation, which include questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and pre-service teachers' reflective journals. As Wellington (2003) argues, the research questions determine what methods are adopted. Table 4.1 represents research questions and data collection instruments:

Table 4.1 Research questions and data collection instruments

| No. | Research Questions | Research Instruments | Participants |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1 | What are the focuses of the microteaching course from pre-service teachers' as well as lecturers' perspectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-service teachers' questionnaire - lecturers' questionnaire - pre-service teachers' interview - lecturers' interview - pre-service teachers' reflective journals | 125 pre-service teachers 14 lecturers 15 pre-service teachers 7 lecturers |
| 2 | What difficulties are encountered by Egyptian university lecturers and their pre-service teachers in the microteaching course? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -pre-service teachers' questionnaire -lecturers' questionnaire - pre-service teachers' interview - lecturers' interview - pre-service teachers' reflective journals | 125 pre-service teachers 14 lecturers 15 pre-service teachers 7 lecturers |
| 3 | How helpful is the microteaching course from Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perspectives in enhancing their teaching performance in schools? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-service teachers' questionnaire - pre-service teachers' interview - pre-service teachers' reflective journals | 125 pre-service teachers 15 pre-service teachers |

The semi-structured interviews were based on the themes which emanated from the results of the questionnaires. Each theme was broad enough to cover the topics and experiences that pre-service teachers wished to talk about. At the same time, the themes reminded me of my frame of research. The questions were used to stimulate the interaction as well as to probe into the participants'

thoughts. The direction of each interview was determined by both the participant's interests and the research constructs, in view of the fact that naturalistic inquiry often deals with opinions and interpretations, and is based on the ideas mentioned in literature that a phenomenon cannot be completely explained through statistics (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Using more than one method reinforces the findings. Triangulating the information gathered through multiple methods adds rigour to the data and reconfirms findings. Many methods lead to greater validity and reliability of the findings (Patton, 1990), and in qualitative terms, trustworthiness and dependability.

There are challenges involved in investigating the world of foreign language education. For example, the pre-service teachers and their lecturers' perceptions include features related to thoughts and expressions that are unobservable, and which pre-service teachers might not be aware of. Another challenge lay in the expectation that pre-service teachers might not always have the appropriate language to discuss issues related to their practice inside the classroom at practicum or during a microteaching session in English. They might not be able, or may not wish, to speak explicitly about issues related to their way of learning or understanding.

4.5.1 Use of triangulation in research instruments

In the current study, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used to overcome the problem of method limitation, and to break down the traditional gap between normative and interpretive approaches and increase the degree of trustworthiness of the data collected (Freebody, 2003). In addition, the notion of triangulation bridges the issues of validity and reliability. The triangulation type used in this study involves using three data collection methods on the same subject of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005).

Triangulation according to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2005, p. 112) means using "two or more data collection methods" especially when researching human behaviour. It helps to reach a complete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Structural

corroboration is a term proposed by Eisner (1998) to identify the ways by which many data types are connected to each other for the purpose of supporting or refuting data interpretation, as using more than one data collection method to explore the same phenomenon assists in highlighting any slight degree of difference or gradation of the issue that might not be observed by using only one method. Therefore, triangulated data are more valid, robust and reliable (Patton, 1990).

4.5.2 Connecting quantitative and qualitative data

As already stated, this study used a sequential exploratory design clarified by Creswell (2003) with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative one. Creswell shows how the two types of data might be integrated during the research process. Integration refers to the stage(s) in the research process where the connection or the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data takes place (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In this sequential design, the quantitative and qualitative phases are connected at two points.

The first connection point was when the results of the questionnaire helped me in developing both the interview questions and the reflective journal to investigate the quantitative results in more depth in the second phase of the study. That is to say that the study's first phase data analysis results guided the second phase data research procedures (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). In the current study the results of the first phase of the study guide the second phase research procedures toward:

- Selecting the participants of the second phase.
- Directing the semi-structured interview questions schedule to profoundly concentrating on the topics that were highly challenging for research participants, according to the questionnaire results, such as peer group work, feedback, reflection and video-taping.
- Examining the reasons behind the inconsistencies which appeared between pre-service teachers and their lecturers' percentage scores on some of the questionnaires' items.

The second connection point was during the qualitative data analysis by using the pattern matching approach. According to Greene (2007, p. 152), “a pattern matching approach offers a characteristically graphical representational mode for analysing mixed data sets for purposes of drawing inquiry conclusions and inferences”. Yin (2009) explains that the heart of pattern matching is comparing empirical data with conceptually expected patterns of data. He added that expected patterns of data are usually generated from social science theories while unexpected patterns of data are derived from data collected. Greene (2007) clarifies that although not explicitly discussed as an option for analysing mixed patterns of data in the mixed methods design literature, pattern matching presents a new alternative for mixed methods analyses because patterns can be represented numerically, textually or graphically. The following Figure 4.2 clarifies how the pattern matching approach was used in the study:

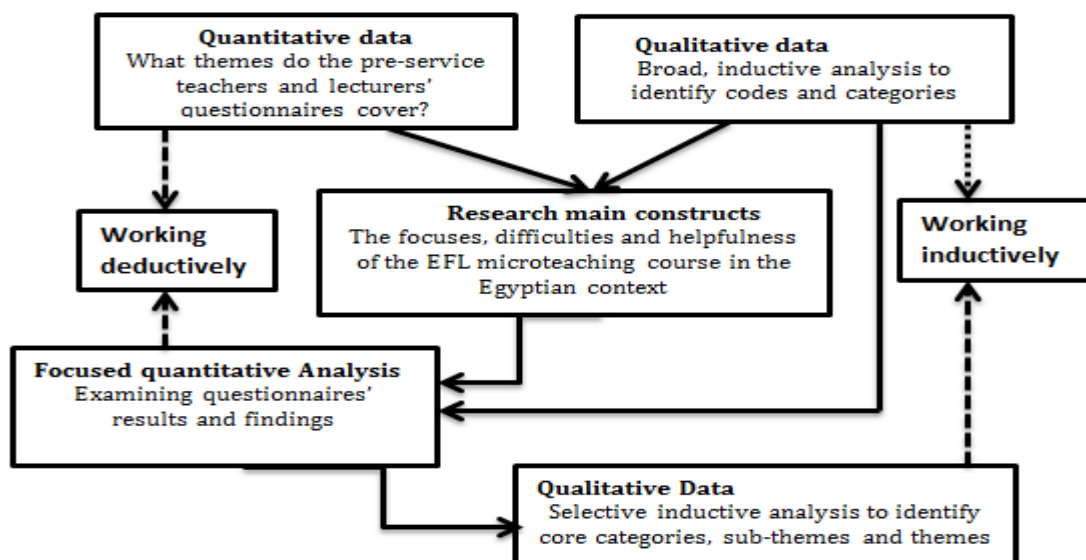


Figure 4.2 The pattern matching approach as used in the study

Note: Solid arrows indicate the coding analysis paths while the dotted arrows indicate the pattern matching process of working inductively and deductively.

Following an induction process across the interviews and the reflective journals, categories and themes emerged from the data that truly reflected the participants' perceptions of the microteaching course (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I then made a shift from this induction process to pattern matching (Yin,2003) that is a type of deductive coding strategy which seeks words, phrases, or even ideas in the data that match prominent propositions in the study's conceptual framework. Once the categories emerged through coding, it became deeper and richer through comparing its categories with earlier evolved theories which can be utilized as models or patterns with which to examine and compare the results (M. Miles & Huberman, 1992). Then, I worked back inductively (Strauss & Corbin, 1998b) to identify core categories, sub-themes and themes from among the identified categories and relate these back to the other categories, to suggest a theoretical model for the application of the microteaching course in the Egyptian context. To sum up, though pattern matching was used to increase the validity of the theoretical construct between data and theory, the study's first priority was to build a deep and valuable description of the study's perceptions of the microteaching course by direct data treatment. In this study, the process of validating theory is governed by the rule that a theory is valid when it is, according to Strauss and Corbin (1994, pp. 278-279), "a systematic statement of plausible relationships traceable back to the data that gave rise to them".

4.6 Research Sample

In the current study, the researcher used two types of sampling strategy: probability and non-probability (Cohen et al., 2005). The probability sampling strategy was used in the first phase of the study while collecting the questionnaire data. A random sample of 125 pre-service teachers was selected from the third year pre-service teachers in the English department at the Faculty of Education in Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom. These pre-service teachers were characterised by certain features that qualified them to be a representative sample of the community of learning English as a foreign language in Egypt. First of all, they are third year pre-service teachers who had spent more than seven years in the preparatory and secondary institutes studying English, and two years in the faculty studying advanced English. That is why they can be

considered the most suitable sample to express their perceptions about the microteaching course. In addition, such pre-service teachers are not under the pressure of first years majoring in a foreign language. Hence they have the ability to express their thoughts in the foreign language. Second, Menoufia University has two Faculties of Education: the main school is in Shebin Elkom and the other one is in El-Sadat city. Most pre-service teachers prefer to come to Shebin Elkom which is the capital of the Menoufia Governorate to study due to the plentiful resources and equipment; and finally, the ample opportunities to find a decent job whether during studying or after graduation. Also, these pre-service teachers started their practicum at preparatory schools of the Menoufia governorate.

A random sample of 14 lecturers was selected from the Faculty of Education in Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom. These lecturers were characterised by certain features that qualify them to be a representative sample of the community of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt. They are faculty members who work for the curriculum, instruction and educational technology department as professors, assistant professors, lecturers and assistant lecturers and they assist in the application of the microteaching sessions with English department pre-service teachers.

In phase two, the non-probability sampling strategy was used while collecting the study qualitative data. The sample of the interviews and reflective journal consisted of 15 pre-service teachers and seven lecturers that were purposely selected according to the criteria of their usefulness for research quality and their importance to develop and test research theory (Silverman, 2010). The second phase participants were selected from the questionnaire sample for sharing the same criteria such as completing the whole questionnaire and answering the open-ended questions in details in addition to having their consent to participate. They were very enthusiastic to do the interview and the reflective journal activities. This sample is considered an opportunist sample, namely, those whom it felt convenient to interview because of their willingness to talk (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005).

4.7 Data Collection Procedures

For the purpose of collecting data to explore Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' and their lecturers' perception about the microteaching course, a two-phase study was conducted based on the principles and assumptions of the mixed methods sequential design. The data collection phase of the study was conducted using three types of instruments: pre-service teachers' and lecturers' questionnaires, pre-service teachers' and lecturers' interviews and pre-service teachers' reflective journal. The following Figure 4.3 represents the methods framework followed in the study:

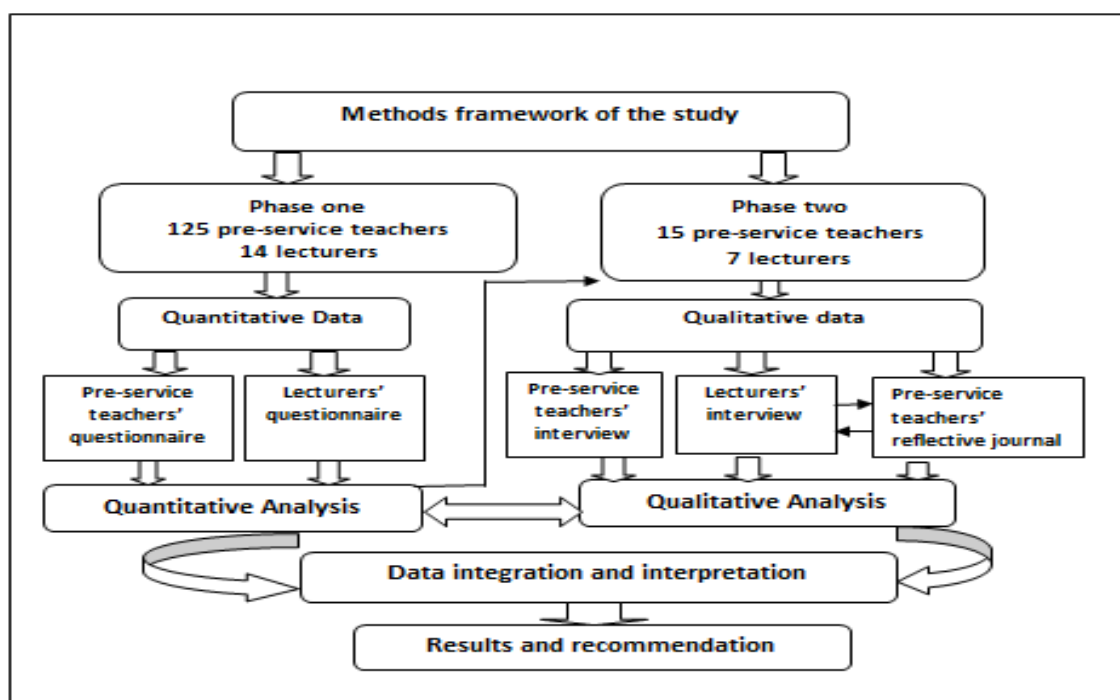


Figure 4.3 The methods framework of the study

The research questionnaires were administered in the first phase of the study, to a sample of 125 pre-service teachers and 14 lecturers in the faculty of education at Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom. Some questionnaires were excluded because they were not completely filled in. Only the valid responses of the pre-service teachers (114) were dealt with and analysed. The questionnaires were analysed using SPSS for windows (v.16), utilising Descriptive Analysis, Person Correlation, and Factor Analysis as devices for statistical treatment. The second phase involved conducting both reflective journal reviews and interviews with

15 pre-service teachers and interviews with seven lecturers drawn from the questionnaires sample. It was crucial to conduct the questionnaires in Phase One to develop a general picture of the microteaching course as perceived by the entire group of pre-service teachers and their lecturers. However, the 15 pre-service teachers involved in Phase Two provided a different and equally important focus. They presented their perceptions of the phenomenon investigated along with other problems and solutions to the educational system in Egypt from their own points of view.

The next section describes the two phases of the study. This includes the procedures taken in their design; refinement based on the pilot study findings; and the contextual constraints that proved to have had a strong effect on the data collection process.

4.7.1 Phase One

Phase one of the study involved administering two questionnaires. The first one was to clarify the pre-service teachers' perceptions about the microteaching course's focuses, difficulties and helpfulness in developing their teaching performance at practicum. The second questionnaire was for illuminating the lecturers' perceptions about the microteaching course's focuses and the difficulties they encountered during the application of the microteaching course for the first time in the Faculty of Education.

According to Dornyei (2003, p. 9), "the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency in terms of researcher time, researcher effort, and financial resources." In addition, a well-constructed questionnaire leads to fast straightforward data results using computer analysis software. Although they have advantages, questionnaires have also some limitations: first, the simplicity and superficiality of some answers which decrease the depth of the investigation. Second, unreliable and unmotivated participants as they sometimes leave out questions either by mistake, literacy problems or demotivation to answer all questions. And finally, the researcher has little or no opportunity to interfere to correct these mistakes (Dornyei, 2003). Questionnaires are widely used instruments for data collection in the Egyptian

context for the previously mentioned advantages, and in this study they acted as a springboard for the other methods, namely interviews and the reflective journal.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the questionnaire is of the five-point Likert scale type that is considered a widely used technique due to several reasons: it is relatively easy to construct, uses fewer statistical assumptions, gives a good reliability, and the procedures of item analysis purify the scale. Also, it makes use of the principle of unidimensionality, and finally according to Brown (2000), it provides valuable information about a respondent's degree of agreement or disagreement on the questionnaire's items. The next section explains in detail the questionnaires used in the study.

4.7.1.1 The pre-service teachers' questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed to gain some information from the sample of the study, pertaining to their perception of the microteaching course's focuses; information about the difficulties they encountered during the application of the new course; and finally information about how helpful was the course in developing their teaching performance skills in schools during practicum. The construction of the questionnaire was directed by three main criteria: first, a review of related literature on ELT, microteaching, and teaching skills (Arends, 2007; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Crookes, 2003; Harichandan, 2010; Singh, 2007; Wallace, 1994); second, a review of similar instruments designed for the same purpose or at least similar in purpose and tendency (Harichandan, 2010; Lakshmi & Rao, 2009; Sharma & Joshi, 2006; Subramaniam, 2006), and finally, the workability of the instrument for the target sample of respondents

Revising the theoretical basis about microteaching and ELT skills helped me to have clear ideas about the theory behind pre-service teachers' behaviour and approaches during the application of the microteaching course. Moreover, it was the primary factor in trying to analyse the pre-service teachers' perceptions by dividing them into sub-classes. Additionally, it helped me decide what the subdivisions of the construct being investigated were. While reviewing the literature related to EFL, microteaching's focuses, difficulties, and helpfulness, I

came across some previous studies that are related, to some extent, to the purpose of the current study.

Mayer (1992) in her thesis at a regional university in Queensland investigated second year pre-service primary teachers and their tutors' perceptions on the skills addressed in the microteaching course, the content level taught, the videotaping of sessions and feedback. The researcher used a Likert-type rating scale that involved both fixed response options and open-ended ones that were coded, based on the main themes of interest for the research. Results indicated the effectiveness of the microteaching course in providing pre-service teachers with experiences that form a complement to practicum in schools. This study provided me with a general view about how to trace the perceptions of foreign language pre-service teachers, and which methods might be used. However, that questionnaire was not used for collecting the data, simply because of the differences between the participants of her study and mine, in terms of culture, background and study design, factors which have to be considered.

Similarly, Sachs (1999) discussed how microteaching, a time honoured approach to developing teaching expertise, could be employed to develop the pre-service teachers' teaching skills and make them ready for their teaching profession. It was also seen as a useful technique to link theory with practice. The participants in his study were final year EFL Bachelor degree students who were preparing for their practicum. Students selected their teaching content and formed pairs to develop their teaching plans. The research discussed the effect of the peer-group work in, for example, planning the micro-lessons, and provided a description of students' planning and feedback implications for how micro-teaching could be more fully integrated into richer education programmes and better utilised as a tool for developing more reflective practice in pre-service student teachers. Although this study was very helpful regarding the theoretical assumptions behind the microteaching, the items of the questionnaire were very theoretical thereby necessitating higher levels of language skills and abilities.

The current researcher tried to follow the benchmark measurement criteria to build a reliable and valid data collection tool (Sax, 1997). The items used in the pre-service teachers' questionnaire were subjected to consecutive stages of development, piloting testing, revision, and validation. Following a comprehensive literature review about microteaching, a number of published microteaching instruments were examined for thoughts concerning content and structure; namely, those of Fernández; Fernández & Robinson; and Subramaniam, (2010; 2006; 2006). Moreover, several microteaching textbooks were researched for ideas that could be used in statements about microteaching's focuses, difficulties and helpfulness. I benefited from the previous work done by researchers (e.g. Karçkay & Sanlı, 2009; Kupper, 2001; Liyanage & Bartlett, 2008) in the field of TEFL and microteaching. Finally, the Baroda General Teaching Competence (BGTC) Scale that had been evolved with emphasis on the development of 21 skills was taken into account when items were generated, as were the standards for teachers of English at pre-service in Egypt (STEP) and the Stanford teacher performance test. These all guided the researcher in building the pre-service teachers' questionnaire. The summarising of teaching skills was useful in building the instrument as these frame a comprehensive conceptualisation of what establishes different categories of teaching skills.

Initially, about 100 items were generated. After selecting and categorising the statements of the questionnaire, and in order to achieve relevance, clarity and readability, 20 items were deleted. Eighty items were left for the questionnaire and categorised in three elements: pre-service teachers' perceptions of the focuses of the microteaching course; their' perceptions of the difficulties encountered by them during the course, and their perceptions of how helpful the course was in improving their performance.

After that, and in order to check the content validity, I asked a Review Committee to review the questions. This committee consisted of six members, four of whom are EFL university lecturers, and the other two are university lecturers who are mainly interested and work in the field of education. They

were asked to review the questionnaire, to give their opinions as to the appropriateness of each item to measure what it is intended to measure, looking at the wording of each statement and identifying any word that they thought might be unclear or confusing to the participants and give suggestions for adding any other categories that might be important to the pre-service teachers' questionnaire. This resulted in some changes in wording and the elimination of some items. In response to the review committee's comments, the questionnaire in its final version consisted of 75 items. Another major change was to give pre-service teachers the option to express their thoughts and feelings about the current microteaching course by adding open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. Pre-service teachers' responses during the interviews covered the issues raised in the questionnaire. This is due to the fact that the questionnaire served in giving just a snapshot of the phenomenon investigated and paved the way for the interviews to go deeper and get an insightful perspective. (See Appendix 3 for details).

4.7.1.1.1 Checking reliability and validity

To check reliability, the questionnaire was field tested under conditions analogous to those anticipated in the final study. The scale was conducted on a sample of 40 pre-service teachers at the faculty of education, Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom. Participants were both male and female third-year English department students. Their answers were transformed into numerical data to allow the SPSS programme to deal with them. By using Cronbach's alpha technique, the reliability coefficient was 0.75 or more, which was high enough to prove that the questionnaire is reliable enough to investigate the perceptions of the pre-service teachers.

In order to examine whether the items within the multi-item scale were internally consistent, I computed Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient using the "Reliability analysis" function of SPSS. The scale underwent some changes as a result of the item analysis, which underscores the utmost significance of piloting the research instruments. To improve the overall reliability of the scale, the researcher identified and deleted the items that reduce the scales' Cronbach

alpha. This was a stepwise process which means to focus on one item at a time before adequate reliability is achieved (at least 0.75).

Table 4.2 Reliability for the pre-service teachers' questionnaire

| The item | Reliability alpha |
|--|-------------------|
| Focuses of the microteaching course. | .8424 |
| Difficulties of the microteaching course. | .8351 |
| Helpfulness of the course to enhance pre-service teachers' teaching performance. | .8578 |

The concept of validity refers to “the ability of the instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure accurately” (Frank-Stromborgy & Olsen, 2004, p. 67). Factor analysis is one of the best statistical methods that have proven effective in testing the validity of the scale used. According to Pallant (2007), it helps the researcher to arrive at a set of key factors that comprise a number of variables constituting the content of the questionnaire. The researcher used in the questionnaire the variables that have higher correlation coefficients extracted from the factor analysis method and excluded variables that have vulnerable correlation coefficients. It should also be noted that the factors that were used in the current study have been obtained through previous studies, with some minor modifications based on the references and theory evidence in this area and the discussion with the supervision committee. Finally, it can be said that the measures used in this research are reliable and valid for the reasons given below.

The two basic measures of factor analysis according to Pallant (2007) were used. The first was the Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) whose value is equal to (0.750) for the measurement of the focuses of the microteaching course, and equal to (0.74) for the measurement of the microteaching difficulties, and equal to (0.731) for the measurement of the helpfulness of the microteaching course in developing the pre-service teachers' teaching performance. These values are larger than the minimum desired (0.70) and this shows the adequacy of the sample size. Note that the value of this test is considered not acceptable if the value is less than (0.50). The second of Pallant's (2007) factor analyses was the degree

of significance from Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (P Value) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This is equal to (0.000) for the focuses, difficulties and the helpfulness of the microteaching course which is less than (0.50), which means that there are significant links between most of the variables of the study that are sufficient for the use of more in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis and that the results of the study will not only have statistical values but applicable and educational values as well (Field, 2005; Pallant, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively. With regard to the responses resulting from this analysis of the open-ended section in the questionnaire, two criteria were used to include this evidence. The first is when the responses added new ideas that were not encountered when doing the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the reflective journal. The second was when the quotes from the questionnaire were more suitable for the development of the category rather than those from the semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions may potentially gather and report such crucial information (Dillman, 1991, 2000). Specifically, if a respondent did not report a complete answer to a scaled survey question, an open-ended question may help capture the actual intent of the respondent. Reliability of the open ended questions was evaluated using inter-rater reliability. The calculated inter-rater agreement was 85% which is sufficient to consider the instrument reliable (Tuckman, 1999). Validity of the open ended questions was evaluated using face validity by "having items reviewed by experts for relevance to the domains of interest" (DeVellis, 2003, p. 50).

Face validity was used by having a diverse panel of expert reviewers who became the source to validate the instrument (Fink, 1995). The expert panel of reviewers provided extensive feedback on the questions content and suggested several revisions to questions, including: reordering of the questions asked, consistency of wording, number of questions per domain, and scale modification.

4.7.1.1.2 Parts of the pre-service teachers' questionnaire

After checking the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, and after this long process of review and careful examination, the questionnaire consisted of three main parts which are explained in detail below.

Focuses of the microteaching course

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to ascertain EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions about the skills practised in the microteaching course. Figure 4.4 represents the first part of the pre-service teachers' questionnaire.

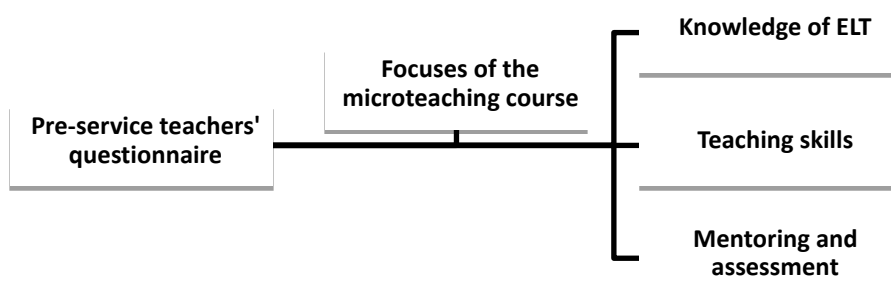


Figure 4.4 Focuses of the microteaching course

This part of the questionnaire consisted of three clusters of questions. Cluster one (five statements) was concerned with the question: How often does the lecturer focus on the knowledge of ELT in the microteaching course? The questions in cluster two (eleven statements) aimed to answer the question: How often does your lecturer focus on teaching skills in the microteaching course? Cluster three statements aimed to answer the question: How often does your lecturer focus on mentoring and assessment in the microteaching course (3 items)?

The last item of this part is an open-ended one that allows the respondent to express freely what is not covered in the original questionnaire (one of the suggestions from the panel members) to give the respondent the freedom, and to allow the researcher to approach areas that might be out of his/her consciousness which he can approach through the interviews.

Difficulties of the microteaching course

It is crucial for any researcher looking at the microteaching course to see the extent to which pre-service teachers are aware of the microteaching course's goals and the difficulties they encounter during the course. This part of the questionnaire consisted of six clusters of questions. Cluster one (three statements) was concerned with the question: How challenging was peer group work for you during the microteaching course? The questions in cluster two (two statements) aimed to answer the question: How challenging was modelling the skill for you during the microteaching course? Cluster three statements (two statements) aimed to answer the question: How challenging was planning a micro-lesson for you during the microteaching course?

The fourth part of the scale aimed at providing an answer to the question: How challenging was teaching a micro-lesson for you during the microteaching course? (six statements). Another question which this part of the questionnaire targeted is: How challenging was the critique session for you during the microteaching course? (four statements).

In cluster six the statements were related to the attitude towards microteaching, trying to answer questions such as: How challenging was the attitude towards microteaching for you during the microteaching course? (two statements). The last item is different from the previous parts as it gives pre-service teachers the chance to express freely what they think was challenging for them and that was not mentioned in the questionnaire.

Helpfulness of the microteaching course

This part consisted of 37 items. Following (Crookes, 2003; Denby, 2008) and based theoretically on both the standards for teachers of English at pre-service in Egypt (STEP) and the qualified teachers' status standards (QTS), the skills investigated are divided into nine main clusters, including for example: teaching, management, curriculum and subject matter, planning, and the learning environment. This nine-factor classification is used because the factors are very helpful in adding some concrete components to the concept of teaching skills.

This part of the questionnaire aimed to provide an answer to this question: Was the microteaching course helpful in developing the following skills?

The first cluster aimed at addressing the teachers' ability to build relationships with students as teaching is often about compromise, full of dilemmas created by the tension between the intentions of the teacher and the demands of the students and the school. This cluster of skills also focused on another aspect of the curriculum: teachers and their relationships, and is underpinned by an exploration of values such as to be healthy and safe. This might be termed the hidden curriculum (Butroyd, 2008) such as teaching children to collaborate, build children's confidence and self-esteem in school, and identify learners with learning difficulties and seek advice for them.

The second cluster of skills aimed at addressing the skills of communicating and working with others. Effective teachers must accept that working independently in the school is never an option. Teachers must constantly seek advice and information from a range of colleagues. Every teacher should be clear about the channels of communication around him. Thody et al. (2000) cited in (Robertson, 2008) present a model to help understand communication. It places the individual at the centre of the model and has radiating concentrically from this, values, attitudes, skills and rationality. They suggest that a teacher's values have an effect on his communication with colleagues, parents and carers. Effective practice comes about by a commitment to objectivity. For example, teachers should be able to build empathy, negotiate effectively with colleagues, use appropriate non-verbal communication, and engage with parents to support learning and teaching, and to raise attainment levels.

The next cluster of statements involved the personal professional development skills, for example, involving collaborative planning, evaluating, and accepting advice and feedback. Continuing personal professional development is interlinked between elements from the school, school networks and other external expertise (Denby, 2008). Blandford (2001) cited in (Swift, 2008) outlines the key issues that professional development should focus on. It involves staying up to date with educational and critical thinking aimed at enhancing students'

achievement, research individually or with colleagues and reflecting on practices and experiences.

The fourth cluster involves teaching and management skills such as making effective use of materials and equipment available in class and the environment, and accomplishing the objectives of the lesson within the time allotted, ensuring that all class time is used for learning. Management and teaching are not separate issues. There is a direct link among curriculum, engagement and management. Smith et al. (cited in Price, 2008) talk about building motivation by “selling the benefits” of what the students are going to learn as students display positive behaviours when they engage positively in a variety of activities and use different materials by which they will demonstrate their learning to the teacher.

The next cluster addresses curriculum and EFL subject matter knowledge such as having secure pedagogical knowledge and understanding of ELT, and explaining language’s functions in different contexts. Al-Jamal & Cullingford (1988) indicated that trainees should have knowledge of the content of training materials and the skills of translating this knowledge into practice. They argued that teacher development might not take place unless the pre-service teacher has expertise not only in the training material but also in the material on which the context is based.

The sixth cluster refers to the skill of planning. For example, lesson planning should be suitable for the age and ability of learners, and for assessing their progress. Lesson planning guides teachers in the process of achieving goals as it helps both learners and teachers to be aware of the instructional objectives, the structure of the content, the suitable times of reinforcement and managing students’ behaviour in the classroom (Woodward, 2007).

The next cluster refers to the skills of assessing and giving feedback such as relating assessment to the intended learning outcomes and supporting learners to develop self-assessment skills, etc. Assessment, whether it is formative or

summative, is very important for improving teaching and learning (Crawford, 2008).

The eighth cluster refers to the skills of reviewing teaching and learning (e.g. helping students to judge their progress towards meeting their learning objectives, and modifying lesson planning in the light of evaluation and assessment, etc.). Teachers should review their teaching approaches and effectiveness in the light of formal evidence such as school targets, learners' progress towards meeting the goals, and making changes where necessary (Woodfield, 2008).

Finally, the last cluster refers to the skills of dealing with the learning environment. For example, working across the school with colleagues to build an interactive learning climate (Cole, 2008).

These nine categories of skills interact with and support each other when used in preparing pre-service teachers for their future career in schools. The following Table 4.3 explains each factor, the skills enlisted within, and the item numbers in the questionnaire.

Table 4.3 Helpfulness of the microteaching course's questionnaire clusters

| N | Teaching Skills Clusters | Item numbers in the questionnaire |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Relationships with students | 39,40,41,42 |
| 2 | Communicating and working with others | 43,44,45,46,47 |
| 3 | Personal professional development | 48,49 |
| 4 | Teaching and Management | 50,51,52,53,54 |
| 5 | Curriculum and subject matter | 55,56,57,58,59,60 |
| 6 | Planning | 61,62,63 |
| 7 | Assessing and giving feedback | 64,65,66,67,68 |
| 8 | Reviewing teaching and learning | 69,70,71 |
| 9 | Learning environment | 72,73,74,75 |

One can see that there are no clear-cut differences among the skills, and that an item can express more than one skill. However, these skills interact and support each other and have an important influence on teaching performance. The final part of the questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question that gives teachers the chance to express themselves freely about the helpfulness of the microteaching course in enhancing their teaching performance at practicum.

4.7.1.2 The lecturers' questionnaire

The lecturers' questionnaire aimed to ascertain the Egyptian EFL lecturers' perceptions of the microteaching course's focuses and difficulties. These perceptions can be split into questions about:

- Lecturers' perceptions of the focuses of the microteaching course (knowledge of ELT, teaching skills, mentoring and assessment);
- Lecturers' perceptions about the difficulties they encounter during the application of the microteaching course (peer group work, modelling the skill, planning a micro-lesson, the critique session and their attitude towards the microteaching course).

This questionnaire encompasses 35 items distributed into 8 elements and is intended to investigate lecturers' perceptions about the focuses and the difficulties of the microteaching course (see Appendix 4). In the current study, it was used to reveal their overall impressions of the microteaching course. In addition, the questionnaire mainly targeted lecturers who help in the application of the course for EFL department pre-service teachers.

4.7.1.2.1 Reliability and validity

To check the reliability of the questionnaire it was conducted on a sample of six lecturers at the faculty of education, Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom. By using the Cronbach alpha technique in the SPSS programme, the reliability score amounted to 0.75 or more, which indicates that the questionnaire is reliable enough to measure the perceptions of the sample of the study. The correlation coefficient method "Alpha Coefficient" was used as one of the most reliable methods of reliability analysis in assessing the degree of internal consistency between the variables under investigation. The table

below shows the correlation coefficient of Cronbach alpha for the variables of the study, where it is clear that the correlation level of all variables is greater than 0.75. This reflects the availability of reliability and trust in research variables, with a degree of confidence of 95%, which supports confidence in the variables of the study and confirms its validity for the next stages of analysis.

Table 4.4 Lecturers' questionnaire reliability

| N | The item | Reliability ALPHA |
|---|--|-------------------|
| 1 | Focuses of the microteaching course | .8971 |
| 2 | Difficulties of the microteaching course | .8279 |

For a reliable and valid lecturers' questionnaire, the items used were subjected to repeated cycles of revision and validation. Initially, sixty items were generated, then after selecting and categorising the statements of the questionnaire, the final set of items were constructed. In order to achieve clarity and readability, and to avoid redundancy, some items were deleted and the remainder categorised into two elements: lecturers' perceptions about the focuses of the microteaching course and lecturers' perceptions about the difficulties encountered by them during the microteaching course.

After that and in order to check the content validity, the review committee were requested to review the questionnaire, which resulted in some changes in wording, and eliminating some items. The questionnaire in its final version consisted of 35 items. Lecturers' responses during the interviews covered the issues raised in the questionnaire. This is due to the fact that the questionnaire served in giving just a snapshot of the phenomenon investigated and paved the way for the interviews to go deeper and get an insightful perspective (see Appendix 4 for details). Finally, it can be said that the measures used in this research are all reliable and valid.

4.7.1.2.2 Parts of the lecturers' questionnaire

After checking the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, and after this long process of review and scrutiny, the questionnaire ended with three main parts.

Focuses of the microteaching course

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to ascertain EFL lecturers' perceptions about the focuses of the microteaching course. This part of the questionnaire consisted of three clusters of questions. Cluster one (five statements) was concerned with the question: How often do you focus on the knowledge of ELT in the microteaching course? The questions in cluster two (eleven statements) concentrated on: How often do you focus on the teaching skills in the microteaching course? Cluster three statements attempt to answer the question: How often do you focus on mentoring and assessment in the microteaching course? (three items).

The last item of this part is an open-ended one that allows the lecturers to express freely anything that is not stated in the original questionnaire (one of the suggestions from the review panel) to give the respondent the freedom, and to allow the researcher to approach the areas that might be out of his/her consciousness which he/she can approach through the interviews.

Difficulties of the microteaching course

It is crucial for any researcher looking at microteaching to see the extent to which lecturers were aware of the goals of microteaching and the difficulties encountered by them during the course. This part of the questionnaire consisted of five clusters of questions. Cluster one (two statements) was concerned with the question: How challenging is modelling the skill for you during the microteaching course?

The questions in cluster two (two statements) aimed to answer the question: How challenging is planning a micro-lesson for you during the microteaching course? The third part of the scale aimed at providing an answer to the question: How challenging is teaching a micro-lesson for you during the microteaching course? (six statements). Another question which this part of the questionnaire targeted was: How challenging is the critique session for you during the microteaching course? (four statements). Cluster five statements were related to the attitude towards microteaching, trying to answer questions like: How

challenging is the attitude towards microteaching for you during the course? (two statements). The last item was the same as the last one in the previous section that gave pre-service teachers the chance to express their thoughts on anything that was not mentioned in the questionnaire.

4.7.2 Phase Two

Phase II involved the administration of two additional methods: interviews, and the reflective journals.

4.7.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

The use of interviews in research is based on the belief that knowledge can be generated between humans, through conversations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005). The interviewer and the interviewee construct knowledge together emphasising its social situatedness. Interviews help both participants and interviewers to discuss their interpretation of the phenomenon they are interested in, and express how they perceive situations from their own points of view (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interviews are a very common method for collecting data due to their potential to get participants to articulate their views, and ideas about the subject, in this case language and language learning. They are oral in nature, and used, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), to thoroughly explore participants' perceptions about themselves; to provide researchers with a profound perspective into the research phenomenon under investigation; and to agree with or refute the previously formulated hypotheses about participants' views based upon their responses to the questionnaire.

I used interviews to elicit pre-service teachers and their lecturers' perceptions of the course, as according to Patton (2002) interviews help participants to explicitly voice their perspectives. Three kinds of interviews were recognized by Patton: informal conversational interview, open-ended interview and the semi-structured interview. The first type of interview is mainly used in informal setting with questions based on the conversation flow. The second type is the open ended one that includes fixed questions with little flexibility. The third, semi-structured interview that is used in this study stands, according to Nunan (1992), in a position between the informal conversational interview and the

open-ended one as it contains main topics to be explored, and permits other areas to be explored depending on the flow of the interview (Vulliamy, 1990). It can be argued here that the semi-structured interview is more suited to the research theoretical framework as participants have different perspectives and views. Thus, the semi-structured interview can help me to investigate these potentially different views as they appear during the interviews (Randor, 2001). Also, it helps me to note the similarities and the differences between the different responses of participants, as there is from the beginning a degree of structure and some main topics to guide me within the course of the interview.

In the current study, two types of interview were conducted. The first was a semi-structured interview, based on the protocol prepared beforehand. The second was a retrospective interview, which occurred after the administration of the reflective journal. This provided the opportunity to ask some directed questions to gain clarification of what was written during the reflective journal. Retrospective interviews were used to complement the reflective journal data collection method for a more comprehensive picture of pre-service teachers' perceptions during microteaching. Its aim was to understand, explain or clarify a certain point or behaviour. This type of interview was performed immediately after the completion of the reflective journal task.

Interviews are quite rare in educational research in Egypt. This is due to one of the problems that are related to the Egyptian context that makes it hard for people to speak honestly when discussing social or political problems for, according to Cook (1998) fear of authority or to be punished. But, it was not surprising to have the participants' agreements since they have the enthusiasm and willingness to help improve the course. (See Appendices 5 and 6 for details).

This study made use of the procedures recommended by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2005), and Nunan (1992). Once the research objectives were established, they were formulated into questions. Then, a list of areas or themes was made to collect information. Care was given to cover the issues addressed in the questionnaire. Minor questions and probes were used bearing in mind the

respondents' background and the contextual constraints expected. Moreover, technical terminology was avoided where possible.

Interview questions were designed to produce long responses (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 161) and they were purposeful conversations (Burgess, 1984, p. 102), guided by themes and topics in a way that allowed them to be "considered, rephrased, reordered, discussed and analysed" (Burgess, 1984, p. 101). In conducting these semi-structured interviews, the intention was to constantly "monitor the direction, depth, and detail of the interview, the topics to include and topics to avoid, together with question order" (Burgess, 1984, p. 120).

The researcher used Rubin and Rubin's (2005) semi-structured interview design for its suitability for the study as it permits for the required structure to explore the study participants' perceptions of the course within its social and political context in addition to the availability of flexibility to probe and go after the participants' multiple interpretations. Rubin and Rubin recommend a process based-interview that coincides with my interview skills as a researcher as they assume having three kinds of interview questions: (1) principle questions that are mainly associated with the study purpose, (2) probing questions that are used to obtain more profound answers, and (3) follow-up questions to complete the answers. Finally, the kind of the relationship I built with my participants was based on Berg's (2007) framework for guiding interviews. This helped me to have honest profound responses from my participants.

All the interview questions were logically related to the interview objectives and also, "formulated to encourage participants to give complete answers" (Gorden, 1992, p. 23). I purposely used language that is familiar and easy and I allowed some freedom for myself to use probes to adapt for participants' responses. In truth, piloting the interviews with a sample of my participants gave me the chance to evaluate the language and the content of the interview and helped me to improve their quality and enhance their validity and reliability (Berg, 2007).

I also put in a protocol for myself to follow mainly for the purpose of putting the participants at ease and not giving them the impression that it is a mechanical process. It also aimed to “reduce the difference between what is expected and what actually occurs” (Groves et al., 2004, p. 281). This protocol follows Groves et al.’s suggestions for a standard data collection process. First, I explained the procedures of the interview to my participants and so this was the process of questions and answers. Second, I interacted with my participants in a professional way to minimize the possibility of pre-service teachers’ and/or lecturers’ conclusion of the preferred answers. Third, when using probes, I utilized them in an indirect way to avoid increasing the probability of one answer over another. Finally, my participants’ answers were recorded as they were given without any interpretation or paraphrasing on the part of the researcher. In reality the interview protocol helped me to specify the questions, the sequence of the questions asked, and some guidelines for what can be said when starting and ending each interview (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

After assembling the interview questionnaire, it was passed to my supervisors and was revised several times through a give-and-take exchange between me and them. Besides this, it was passed to experienced people from the review committee for comment because what appears to be straightforward to the researcher may be confusing to others new to the study (Wragg, 2005). Piloting the interviews was done in April 2011. Three pre-service teachers and two lecturers were chosen randomly from third year pre-service teachers and their lecturers at the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University in Shebin Elkom and were used as cases for the interviews. Questions about the areas intended to cover the aims of the study were piloted. Resulting from such piloting, some questions were modified or extended while some others were combined together.

Before conducting the interviews, and in the first sessions with the pre-service teachers, I asked them whether they preferred the interviews to be conducted in Arabic or English. Some pre-service teachers preferred to be interviewed in Arabic to allow them to speak freely, and not to let language be an obstacle,

others wished to give themselves the chance to speak in English unless they got stuck. The translation of the transcripts was validated by professional translators working in the Department of English, faculty of Arts. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in full. The transcribed interviews were sent by email to the interviewees for the purpose of validation (Bloor, 1997; McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Interviewees were asked to check that the comments reported in the interviews were theirs. This helped to keep the informants in touch with the research, which is an essential step in qualitative research.

As for the informants' familiarity with the research, a briefing was handed to them including the overall aims of the study and how the information to be collected from interviews relates to the data obtained from the questionnaires and the reflective journal. Some interviewees were welcomed to have a look at the interview schedule beforehand since the aim was to get informants to talk openly about themselves, and reflect upon their perceptions in as much a related atmosphere as possible. Discussions sometimes ranged well beyond the list of the topics to be covered but are still relevant to the overall aims of the research.

The appointments for both interviews were left to the informants, for convenience and for them to feel relaxed and able to openly express themselves. In addition, two digital recorders were used. A title and a date are spoken into the recorder before each interview. For administrative reasons, some interviews were broken off the middle and completed afterwards either on the same day or the following day because interviews were conducted during the non-studying time of pre-service teachers. For easy reference and friendliness, I put the interview questions on paper cards, each including one section. Face to face position with the participants was avoided. A good rapport was established with respondents but this did not necessitate complete identification with them. This was carried out through probes, clarifications, and reading their verbal cues indicating confusion or hesitation. Probes could be used including simple gestures, such as nodding or saying "Uh-huh", "I see", "Yes", neutral question like "Could you tell me more about this?" or for more clarification, "What do you

mean exactly by this?" to motivate the informant to say more. Some interviews were conducted at the lecture room during free classes. Others, upon informants' request, were carried out in the language laboratory so that they could talk more freely away from the workplace. Some pre-service teachers preferred to attend one another's interview. The overall attitude from the informants was helpful, constructive and open, with pre-service teachers and lecturers declaring they were grateful to have an opportunity to give their opinions, which they hoped would reach policy-makers.

4.7.2.2 The Reflective Journal

The reflective journal method is frequently used to access pre-service teachers' perceptions and thoughts. In reflective journal, an experience is recalled, considered and evaluated as a way of taking control of pre-service teachers' own learning and bringing change (Smith & Hatton, 1995; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). The acts of looking objectively at teaching and reflecting critically on experiences could be achieved by reflective journals (Richards & Lockhart, 1994) as they help teachers develop a better understanding of themselves as teachers and of how they develop in their own teaching/learning contexts. In journal writing, pre-service teachers write the events and ideas encountered and this writing process is believed to trigger a discovery process (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). The use of reflective journals has commonly appeared in teacher education literature (Atay, 2008; Brownlee, Purdie, & Boulton-Lewis, 2001; Canning, 1991; Posner, 2000) but most of the studies involve participants who are engaged with reflective writing (reflective journals, portfolios or pre-service teacher narratives) during their practicum courses.

In using the reflective journal as data collection method, participants are always provided with a reflection task and required to write everything they think while performing the task. A reflective journal is a strong way of exploring participants' hidden perceptions. However, it still has some limitations as it relies heavily on the participant's written report during the reflection process, thus, results could be influenced by some possible problems, such as written ability limitation, accidental stimulus, disruption or a temporarily lack of

thoughtful thinking (Garner, 1987; Henk, 1993; Lau, 2006).

Smyth (1989) focuses on the raising of social and professional consciousness as a purpose for a reflective journal. Moon (2006) suggests the use of the reflective journal as a means of epistemological maturity and as an assessment tool in formal education. Some participants are less able than others at oral self-expression, therefore journals can help them express themselves in an alternative manner (Bowman, 1983). Some learners have much to express, but are not in suitable social or emotional situations for that expression. Journal writing is an alternative voice. Also, questions are widely used as a means of starting writers. It is much easier to answer a question than to generate new material. Questions may guide the journal writer's sequence of thinking (Carlsmith, 1994; Johns, 1994). In addition, reflective journals can be used as purpose-made assessment tools. This framework is developed for a re-teaching programme that particularly promotes reflective approaches to assess the effectiveness of the approach (Sparkes-Langer & Colton, 1991; Sparkes-Langer, Simmons, Pasch, Colton, & Starko, 1990).

To ensure the reflective journals' validity and reliability, the researcher took into account some methodological considerations about written report data collection as suggested by Moon (2006): first, providing participants with guidance and directions to encourage the reflective process rather than explaining the process itself. Second, recognizing the participants' individual differences in their thinking and writing; and finally using reliable categories to code the reflective journals, in addition to pairing or triangulating this method with other data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires. These suggestions and considerations have been taken into account when conducting this practical part of the study.

The reflective journal was designed according to Smyth's (1989) reflectivity stages: describe, inform, confront and reconstruct. (See Appendix 7 for details.) These stages have been employed in the current study as a base in building the reflective journal that the participants are going to use at the end of the

microteaching course to help understand how they perceive the new course. The first stage of reflectivity involves a description of what pre-service teachers expect about the microteaching course before its application. The second stage of reflectivity, which is called “inform” requests pre-service teachers to look back to the past and contemplate their practices in the microteaching course by asking them to reflect on and think about the microteaching course after it has been applied. In the third stage, “confront”, the source of knowledge for reflective thinking goes beyond the pre-service teacher's mental picture of what happened in the past or what should happen in the course to include other elements about the consequences of microteaching by asking them about what they would do differently if they have the course again. Finally, “reconstruct” is the final stage of reflectivity that aims at decreasing the gap between what they expected to do in the course and what actually occurred. The pre-service teachers’ answers can be guided by the question; how will the data collected from this reflection inform future use? This kind of reflection is closely related to confronting reflectivity for many reasons. Among these reasons are: that the content required to rebuild instructional practices involves a participant's perceptions of points of conflict between the course as planned and as taught. Also, the type of reflective process formulating the confronting reflection can be a base for rebuilding reflection.

Taking into consideration the points mentioned earlier, a reflective journal was prepared and used for data collection. Participants of this activity, (n=15), are exposed to training in how to answer the questions in the reflective journal. Training involved the importance of reflection and how to reflect on their ideas about themselves, their peers, the classroom activities and their lecturers. The training session was deemed important to equip pre-service teachers with necessary skills, so that they can be able, willing and comfortable to answer the questions in the reflective journal.

In the training session, I introduced the reflective journal process to pre-service teachers both written by modelling the process to them and orally by telling them what they could do if they experience any difficulty. Also, I ensured that

pre-service teachers could think and write in the language in which they felt most comfortable, either Arabic or English. After training, and in the next session, pre-service teachers were given the reflective journal. Following Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson (1996, p. 98) and Upton (1997), these pre-service teachers were allowed to use "whatever language they felt most comfortable using" during their reflective journal writing.

4.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher intended to use the inductive process as it has been influenced by the subjective epistemology, and it can be used in the interpretive paradigm that is philosophically underpinning this research. Participants' experiences and perceptions cannot be considered independently of context, where context includes participants' background, experiences, the researcher, and the circumstances and situations circumscribed and defined by participants in the microteaching sessions (Grandy, 1998; Patton, 2002). Analytically and pragmatically speaking, there is significant interdependence between all of these factors. Any method used for data analysis must acknowledge this interconnectivity and provide an adequate basis for representation of this study's co-constructions.

The coding process was used to classify the relationships between the related categories and to arrange and unify the data. Also, it was employed to arrange the data in a way that incorporates process and structure into the analysing scheme related to the phenomena under investigation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998a). Some codes were created at the first round of reading and others arose in the second and some in the third reading of the transcript. This system of coding and labelling proved beneficial when the need arose to "refer back or to retrieve data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 58). I followed Thomas' (2003) inductive approach to analyse qualitative data by completed the steps outlined in the following Table 4.5 to arrive at the categories:

Table 4.5 Steps of analysing qualitative data

| Step | Description |
|---|--|
| Formatting | Interview and reflective journals' notes were created. |
| In-depth text reading | Identifying codes by careful text reading. |
| Building categories | Identifying categories that are relevant. |
| Identify repeated, mixed or missing coding | Identifying text that might be related to many categories and identifying text that is not relevant to the research. |
| Revise and refine categories | Subtopics were identified. |

Adapted from: Thomas, 2003 Inductive approach of analysing qualitative data

Codes were given operational definitions and names that are closest to the concepts they describe for the purpose of easy reference. Certain methodical procedures were used to manage persistent comparisons of the data to provide explanation and justification for the participants' responses to both the reflective journal and interview:

Microanalysis is an analytical procedure that imposes a detailed analysis of the data gathered from interviews and the reflective journal, word-by-word and line-by-line, especially at the start of data analysis, for the purpose of looking for interesting or relevant material. My purpose to do so was to interpret the meanings of the information provided by the research participants and to offer the chance to assess what could be known from a certain participant that could be applied to other participants. This microanalysis of each participant produced new perspectives and developed my sensitivity to the structure and process of the microteaching course. It also helped me to transform from forming a critical opinion about raw data to interpreting and conceptualizing the data, which was an important stage in the process of data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

The research uses theoretical comparison as a tool along with the constant comparison method of analysis to conceptualize the data. Conceptualizing and categorizing the data involved sorting concepts together into groups that share similarities and differences to produce categories, and to name them according to their properties. Each category symbolizes a classification of concepts

obtained from events or interactions that represented the phenomenon investigated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998b). Data theoretical comparisons manifest concepts that indicate the participants' experiences, the difficulties they encountered, and how they worked to achieve the goals they had established. Results of the data analysis indicate the perceptions of research participants in relation to the course focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the course to enhance pre-service teachers' performance at practicum. The research main constructs are displayed vertically while the themes, sub-themes and meta-categories are displayed horizontally, as shown in the following Figure 4.5:

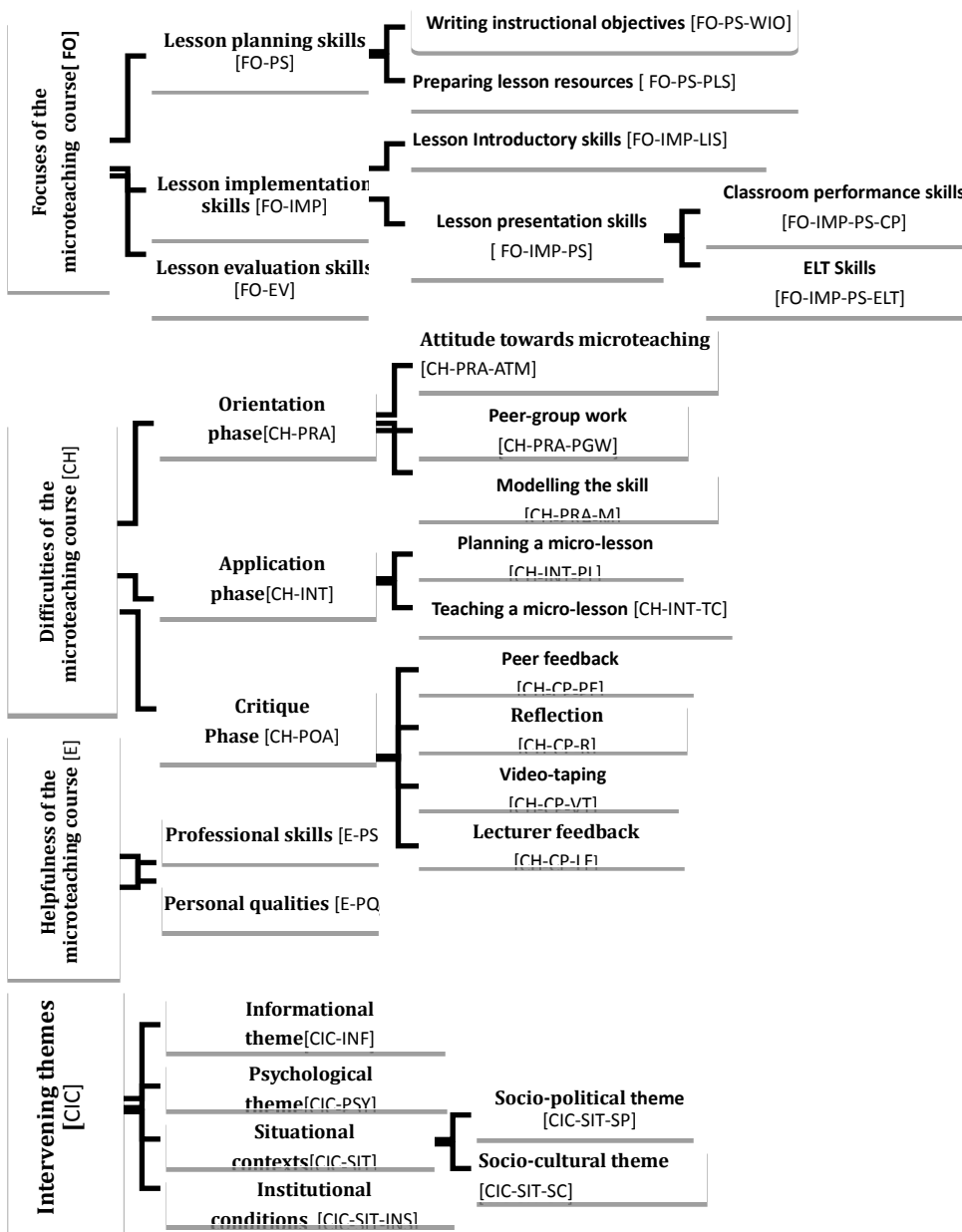


Figure 4.5 Research themes, subthemes and categories

The main purpose of the analysis was to make sense of the data and to make meaning, as Merriam (1998) suggested. Care was taken not to impose my expectations on the data and to let the categories or the themes emerge from the data by taking into account that it fits the situation, and that it works. In other words, according to Dick (1999) that it helps make sense of the participants' experience and perceptions. Reliability was checked at two levels: firstly through data coding, and secondly, data analysis and categorisation. Concerning coding, it aimed to ensure that the codes fit into the structure and with one another and that they relate to or are distinct from others in a meaningful way. Check-coding of the transcripts was also useful as a reliability check. This was conducted in two ways: firstly, by doing the coding twice at two different times; and secondly, by asking a colleague in the same field to code two interviews and see whether he can give the same codes for the same segments of the data. The same codes were used by the researcher to check the extent of their representation of the same data chunks. In the case of agreement, a tick (/) was placed and for disagreement, a cross (x) was placed. For the second approach, a reliability coefficient was calculated between both my colleagues' coding and my own coding to make sure that all codes fit into a structure. The calculated inter-rater agreement was 85% (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984; Hallgren, 2012). Agreement was also achieved on the operational definition of codes, with a result of 90%.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Educational research is an interpersonal, social and political activity. Following Christians, 2000; Manson, 1996; Wellington, 2003, there are some ethical questions covering the research study, from the preparation and purpose to the conclusion and implication. There were several ethical issues to consider while conducting the current research. These issues are listed by the British Psychological Society (2009) and The British Educational Research Association BERA (2009). These include the informed consent given to pre-service teachers and lecturers before conducting the interviews and the reflective journals; their right to withdraw, and the protection of their identity and confidentiality. Moreover, the study was also approved by The Faculty of Education of Menoufia University where the study took place. The Egyptian Cultural Office and

Educational Bureau gave their approval before allowing me to travel to do the field study. In addition, permission to contact pre-service teachers and carry out the fieldwork is obtained from the supervisors of the study. Moreover, and in order to protect the participants' privacy, their names have been changed to pseudonyms. I also asked their permission to use quotes from the interviews and reflective journal in reporting the research. Cognisant of the situational and cultural assumptions of social interaction that define researcher-researched relations, my ethical regard for others respects the principles discussed below.

The first of these ethical principles is collaboration, which, according to Flinders (1992, p. 107), “honours the trust on which the researcher's usage of information and access is anticipated and out of which produces a sense of collaborative labour”. Negotiating access, then, becomes more than just informing potential interviewees about to what they were agreeing. Importantly, an invitation to collaborate involves genuine dialogue guided by an open agenda: the opportunity to peruse and adjust transcripts, to designate some information as confidential, to withdraw from the study at any stage and to receive feedback either through viewing the final report, receiving a summary, or through personal contact with the researchers.

Similarly, avoidance of imposition in the collection of data, the second ethical principle, involves more than just minimising potential risks for interviewees, such as psychological stress or damage to personal, professional and public reputations. More than a reference to standards, the ethical principle is based on the researcher-researched character relations and can often go beyond the rules of conduct negotiated as part of access. For example, extended interviews and the perusal of interview transcripts constitute an imposition on the lives of interviewees, to which they have already agreed. Yet, sensitivity is still required in how far the researcher can labour an issue during interview and in how soon and how often one can remind interviewees about the return of adjusted transcripts.

Confirmation, a third ethical principle of qualitative study which, according to Flinders (1992, p. 107), refers to “attributing the best possible motives to others in agreement with our grasp of the pertinent facts”. This is related to the management of records and the maintenance of detailed accounts of names and contacts in order to knowledgeably communicate with participants. It can also inform the representation of interviewees within research reports to the extent that confidentiality is maintained, even when waived, where this is seen as not adding significantly to meanings and where disclosure may jeopardise their personal and professional relations.

As a consequence of the above ethical considerations, research participants were asked to read through a number of ethical clearance forms before giving their informed consent of participating in the study. The forms outlined the objectives of this study and what each pre-service teacher's involvement in this study would entail. Because the researcher was also working as an assistant lecturer in the department of curriculum and instruction in the same faculty, ample information and discussion opportunities were available to the participants in order to convince them that their participation or non-participation would have no effect on their grades. During the course of the study, every participant was able to preview at any time any transcript of data constructed as a result of their input.

4.10 Roles of Researcher

Socio-constructionism inquiries require interaction between researcher and participants to generate findings so that any resulting knowledge is thus a social co-creation (Gadamer, 1976, 1990; Patton, 2002). These points make consideration of my position relative to that of the participants crucial, and I therefore discuss my own roles in the conduct of this study below. My role within this study is best described as a researcher, intent upon my doctoral research and conducting this study. I developed personal friendships with most of the participants, a few of which have been maintained to this day. My role as assistant lecturer provided knowledge of the lecturers' expectations. My friendships with participants supported both my research activities and my work as an assistant

lecturer. I was in daily contact with and concerned about participants, who were encouraged to be informal and relaxed during interview sessions, and to discuss any issues emerging from the microteaching course in confidence. Such intimacy lent authenticity to the data thus collected, as sensitive, emotionally laden discussions were the norm. My obvious and genuine interest in participants' progress engendered several lasting friendships that still continue despite large intervening geographic distances. These friendships created opportunities for helping my participants in their practicum and for giving guidance for colleagues. This guidance often took one of several forms: providing suggestions for specific modelling during their microteaching sessions, working to reassure pre-service teachers after a microteaching session, and providing help with feedback on the microteaching assignments.

4.11 Maximizing the Quality of the Research Design

Guba and Lincoln & Guba (1981; 1985) have presented an alternative to the traditional quantitative evaluative criteria to secure the validity of research interpretations. These are trustworthiness criteria, consisting of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Schwandt, 2001) and I added democratic or dialogic validity for its importance to my research assumptions.

Credibility refers to the research internal validity, and whether the study findings symbolize a plausible interpretation of the genuine data. The researcher used two methods to guarantee the research credibility, which are member checking and investigator triangulation. Therefore, it is pinpointed that the researcher should endeavour to match the constructed realities in the interpretations of the data with the realities of the study participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Investigator triangulation was also achieved by using three translators to check the translation of the participants' transcripts of the interviews. Second, participant feedback/member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) was used by e-mailing the written transcripts to the study participants to clear up any areas of misunderstanding. This method helped to comprehend the participants'

perception of the microteaching course and provide a valid account of these perspectives that leads to more credible research findings.

Dependability is, according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the reliability by which the data were collected as it is concerned with how reliably an instrument would gather the same results from the same sample after usage is repeated. In the current study, I used methodological triangulation which conforms to the use of mixed methods in research. Methodological triangulation is an attempt to enhance the validity of research findings by using various techniques in the same study (Murray, 1999), the rationale being that weaknesses inherent in one method are balanced by the strengths in another (Jack & Raturi, 2006).

Confirmability refers to the idea that “data can be confirmed by someone other than the researcher” (Toma, 2006, p. 417) and the objectivity of the data. It was achieved in the current study by doing two things. First, I gave a clear description of how my research data were collected and analysed. This was supported by the feedback given by my two thesis supervisors. Second, I used what Given (2009) calls ‘an audit trail’ where I asked an independent reviewer to verify that the research process and interpretations of the data are consistent at both the literature and methodological levels. Finally, I returned all the written transcripts of the interview to the research participants by e-mail to make sure that they are consistent with their perceptions of the required changes. Both dependability and confirmability were employed in this study by piloting the interview questions and the reflective journal to practise and evaluate the questions and their delivery.

Transferability reflects the researcher’s awareness and description of the scope of one’s qualitative study so that its applicability to other different contexts can be readily determined (Given, 2008). Although the findings of my study are not related to all faculties of education in Egypt, it is at the level of concepts and explanation that generalisation can take place. Assessing representational generalisation in qualitative research, as Ritchie & Lewis (2003) argue, rests on two broad concerns.

The first issue deals with the accuracy of the data collection and data analysis processes. This was achieved in the current study through the inclusion of a range of variables, and the use of multiple methods for triangulating the data collected and the findings. I also provided the reader with some possible interpretations of the findings relating such findings to other pertinent literature in EFL/ESL microteaching from different contexts. In addition, strict procedures were followed for the data collection and analysis.

The second issue addresses the sample's representativeness of the parent population. Representation here, as Ritchie & Lewis (2003, p. 268) claim, "is not a statistical representation, but an inclusive one". In the current study, symbolic representation was achieved through the diversity of dimensions and constituencies that are central to the explanation. In other words, the findings of the present research are not concerned with a single case of microteaching, but they are representative of the many microteaching focuses and difficulties which Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers might encounter in their learning of teaching skills. I can argue here that the findings of this study may be reflected elsewhere in the Egyptian context based on the sample characteristics: they share the same culture, experiences, and EFL learning and teaching context. Thus, I can assume that the current study's findings can be generalized.

Democratic validity is an important process that ensures the efficacy of the researchers' claims (Gall et al., 2003) and reduces research bias (Mertler, 2006). According to Herr and Anderson (2005), there are many ways to decrease this bias. Among these ways is to keep a close relationship and democratic dialogue with participants about the research (Creswell, 2007; Mertler, 2006). Therefore, to create critical agents or peers (Herr & Anderson, 2005) who help me keep an eye on my data, and send me back to examine my research assumptions especially those of educational change.

4.12 Research Authenticity Self-Evaluation

Arriving at this research problem was more a matter of the academic context in which I found myself, rather than a result of merely trying to find a research question in order to complete a study to get a Ph.D. The goal of this study was born out of a need to grasp how pre-service teachers and their lecturers within an Egyptian environment learn and teach through the new microteaching course and how this knowledge could be used to graduate even better equipped pre-service teachers to fulfill the ongoing requirements of the Egyptian agenda. One of the challenges I faced during my PhD study was to manage, analyse and interpret research qualitative data because I had never done it before in Egypt. In the light of the above mentioned, I tried to self-evaluate the authenticity of my qualitative research using the criteria shown in the following Figure 4.6.

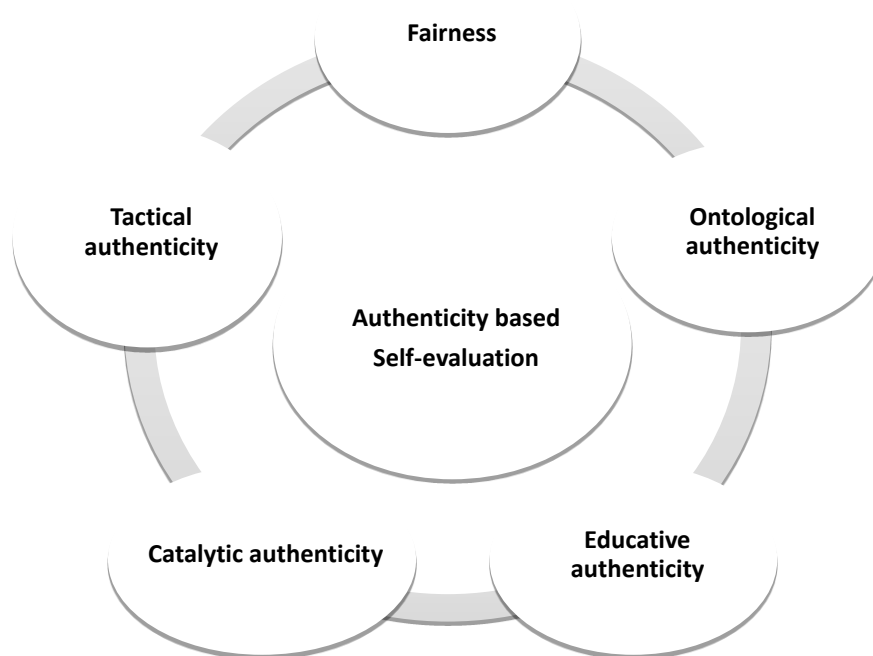


Figure 4.6 Research authenticity-based self-evaluation

Within the context of this study, my concerns about fairness in representing potentially opposing viewpoints and perceptions were overlaid within the analysis of data. Guba & Lincoln (2003) defines fairness as the extent to which all competing constructions of reality as well as their underlying value structures have been accessed, deconstructed, and shape the inquiry product. Patton (2002)

also describes several characteristics of fairness as relevant to this study (p. 575): the assumption and awareness of multiple and possibly adversarial perspectives; an emphasis upon elucidation of a researcher's views and how these views may have affected the research; and 'balancing' a presentation of perspectives, as a technique designed to maximize fairness in representation to all (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lay & Papadopoulos, 2007; Patton, 2002). I was acutely aware of social power differentials and the possible assessment impacts of a poor microteaching performance.

Ontological authenticity refers to the range over which participants' early constructions are improved, and developed, so that all groups have more information and become more reflective in its use (Guba & Lincoln, 2003). This research actively sought ontological authenticity. Seeking to characterize participant perceptions entailed work whereby the tacit becomes explicit for the participants and researcher alike. The elucidation, development, and refinement of our joint constructions over the course of the study served to better inform participants, researcher, and eventual audience. This work may have served to change or promote future changes in perceptions useful to participants and/or the researcher. I believe this process has engendered further reflection and thought for my participants, allowing them to further examine and understand their own perceptions and those of others.

Educative authenticity refers to the range over which participants have enhanced their grasping of, and appreciation for, the constructions of others outside their own group. At least for me, much of this was present because of my need to reconcile all participants' viewpoints. I am convinced that they came to more fully appreciate their own perceptions over the course of this study. The reflective journal provided ample opportunities for participants to become aware of multiple perspectives, as did the activities within the course itself. While power differentials prevented student participants from being able to publicly voice their issues, my unique roles as a researcher and an assistant lecturer at least provided these participants an outlet for their concerns.

Catalytic authenticity is the extent to which an action such as clarifying the focus, or moving to solve or get rid of a problem, is stimulated and facilitated by the inquiry process (Guba & Lincoln, 2003). While I did not have as a goal any notion of changing my participants' perceptions and beliefs about teaching or learning, the catalytic authenticity of this study may lie in its ability to help transition the current situation of microteaching to another.

Tactical authenticity is the degree to which participants are qualified to take the action that the inquiry enfolds or suggests (Guba & Lincoln, 2003). The question of tactical authenticity was an interesting one when applied to this study. Based on the evidence obtained from this study, one cannot judge that the microteaching course or this inquiry immediately or noticeably changed and affected the participants' performance. Instead, there may be grounds laid for future change. I did not suggest courses of action to participants, instead I focused on perceptions as they existed and evolved over the course of this study. Participants may have found challenges as a result of the context they found themselves in, as a result of reflective thinking, or in discussions with the researcher. However, from my place as an assistant lecturer, my role for participant empowerment was to make participants aware of their perceptions so that they may be able in the future to more easily examine, adapt, and/or change them. Therefore, suggesting empowerment in this context can be applied by enabling participants to freely express themselves and engage in various reflective practices.

This chapter has presented the research paradigm, the methodology, the mixed methods design and the research procedures. Moreover, it highlights the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the research. The next chapter focuses on the data analysis process and presents the findings of the current study where quantitative and qualitative data are integrated.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis & Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the current study. Chapter Five has been divided into four sections, each dealing with one of the four questions of the study. The first section highlights the findings related to the focuses of the microteaching course for Egyptian pre-service teachers and their lecturers at Menoufia University Faculty of Education in Egypt. The second section is concerned with presenting the different microteaching difficulties encountered by study participants. The third section deals with the helpfulness of the microteaching as perceived by EFL pre-service teachers in developing their teaching performance at practicum. Finally, the last section presents the themes of intervening factors that affected the application of the microteaching course in the Egyptian context, as revealed by the data analysis process.

5.2 The Focuses of the Microteaching Course

This research question looks into the different focuses of microteaching at Menoufia University, Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt. Focuses here refer to the skills practised on the course that are designed to help improve EFL pre-service teachers' teaching performance. To answer this question, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from pre-service teachers and lecturers' questionnaires, interviews with pre-service teachers and lecturers, and from pre-service teachers' reflective journals.

First, descriptive statistics was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) to find out the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement among the participants regarding the various issues raised in the questionnaire. Their responses were fed into and were integrated with the qualitative analysis. Table 5.1 below shows the rounded percentages of pre-service teachers' and their lecturers' responses to the questionnaire items that are related to their perceptions of the microteaching focuses or the skills practised on the course and are believed by Egyptian microteaching lecturers to be potentially

effective in improving pre-service teachers' teaching performance, which is similar to what was argued by Singh (2007).

Both lecturers and pre-service teachers completed the focuses of the microteaching questionnaire which is a 19-item measure designed to explore the focuses of the microteaching course by asking "how often is each of the following skills practised in the course?". Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale: 5= Always (every session); 4= Often (four sessions a week); 3= Sometimes (two sessions a week); 2= Rarely (one session a week); 1= Never (no session). For the present study, the always, often, and sometimes subscales were added together to equal a total scale score, that was utilised during analyses to express participants' responses and that appeared on table 5.1. Elevated scores indicate increased levels of skills practising. These focuses were reported as seen by pre-service teachers' and lecturers' questionnaires as shown in the following table:

Table 5.1 The focuses of the microteaching course from pre-service teachers' perspectives

| The skills practised on the course | Pre-service teachers' responses | Lecturers' responses |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Knowledge of ELT | 57% | 46% |
| Grammar | 63% | 36% |
| Writing skills | 55% | 43% |
| Oral skills | 54% | 50% |
| Reading skills | 54% | 43% |
| New vocabulary | 61% | 57% |
| (B) Teaching Skills | 74% | 20% |
| Reinforcement | 43% | 29% |
| Classroom management techniques | 86% | 21% |
| Set induction | 81% | 14% |
| Silence and non-verbal clues | 80% | 14% |
| Writing instructional objectives | 79% | 21% |
| Explaining | 80% | 14% |
| Asking questions | 84% | 7% |
| Lesson closure | 75% | 7% |
| Stimulus variation | 68% | 14% |
| Learning resources | 70% | 29% |
| Increasing student participation | 66% | 50% |
| (C) Mentoring and Assessment | 47% | 55% |
| Providing feedback to individual learners. | 40% | 71% |
| Discussing students' language learning needs. | 53% | 43% |
| Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress | 47% | 50% |

The data presented in Table 5.1 deals with the skills practised in the microteaching course from pre-service teachers and lecturers' perspectives. The largest skills area practised in the course were the teaching skills with a 74% percentage as perceived by pre-service teachers; while from the lecturers' perspectives they were the skills least practised in the course with a percentage of 20%. Mentoring and assessment skills have the lead with a percentage of 55% as perceived by lecturers, although they were seen by pre-service teachers to be the skills least practised in the course with a percentage of 47%. It was really interesting to see such a discrepancy among research participants' viewpoints concerning the skills practised in the course. Some reasons behind such a difference are revealed by the qualitative data analysis.

Second, as revealed by qualitative data analysis, three main themes and their sub-themes were constructed to include: lesson planning skills, lesson implementation skills, and lesson evaluation skills. Additionally, categories emerged from codes to present the multiple perspectives perceived by the participants of the skills practised in the microteaching course. Comments often varied, reflecting the unique experiences of each participant. The three main themes that constitute the focuses of the microteaching course within the Egyptian context are shown in the following, Figure 5.1:

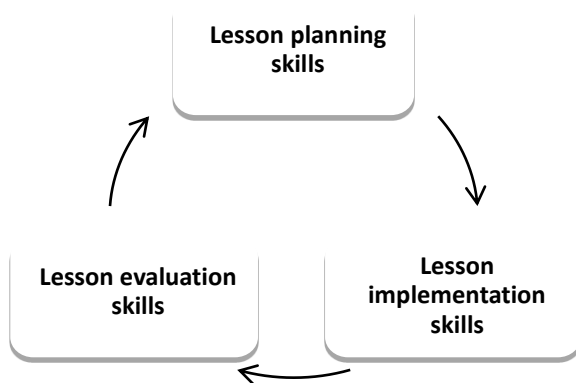


Figure 5.1 Focuses of the microteaching course

5.2.1 Lesson planning skills

The first theme of the microteaching course's focuses relates to lesson planning skills that refer to deciding on educational objectives, selecting content and preparing the materials and resources to be used. Data analysis highlighted the value of lesson planning skills to make pre-service teachers feel secure. For example, Lecturer 1 stated that:

"Good planning is very important for successful teaching as it assists pre-service teachers to teach effectively, as it helps the pre-service teacher know exactly what s/he will do and how to do it. Designing associated lesson resources for certain learning objectives is a very crucial point in lesson planning."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Pre-service teacher 2 considered lesson planning as "really important" for the pre-service teacher because it guides him/her to know the material to be presented and prepare difficult aspects of it. She stated:

"It helps me to think of the lesson before teaching.....I should think of the problems that may face me.....This gives me confidence and not to be shocked in front of the learners, otherwise, I will feel lost and frustrated."

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: interview)

The need to strike a balance between planned activities and emergent issues was highlighted. For example, Pre-service teacher 6 mentioned:

"It is important to apply what I have planned but, what about any issue I didn't think of that could help learners?"

(Pre-service teacher 6; Data source: reflective journal)

This indicates pre-servicers' need to know how to be flexible with the application of the lesson plan and not to only stick to what they have already planned. This also might suggest that pre-service teachers are aware of the fact that they are in need of learning how to be flexible in their planning. In addition, it implies that pre-service teachers think that their lecturers are not giving them what they actually need, but rather giving them what the lecturers think they should know. There are varied reasons for lecturers' emphasis on lesson planning skills: first, lesson planning could provide pre-service teachers with enough confidence when presenting the lesson and anticipating sources of difficulties and problems which might arise and how to deal with them. Second, without good preparation, the pre-service teacher might be shocked and be at a loss, which in turn could affect the

pre-service teacher's image in front of the learners (Butt, 2006; Haynes, 2010; Misrah, 2008). So, preparing the lesson in advance could help pre-service teachers avoid these pitfalls. Thus, lesson planning is crucial for pre-service teachers to avoid many problems they might encounter in their teaching.

Analysis of the data revealed that two categories have been explored to construct this theme: writing instructional objectives and preparing lesson resources, as shown in the following, Figure 5.2:

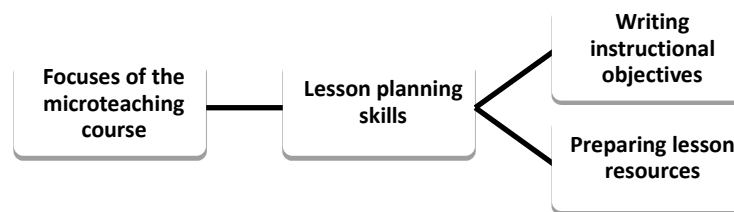


Figure 5.2 Lesson planning skills theme

Writing instructional objectives

Analysis of the data from this questionnaire item shows that 21% of lecturers and 79% of pre-service teachers indicated that writing instructional objectives was one of the skills practised in the course. Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how writing instructional objectives were dealt with during the microteaching course. The writing of instructional objectives category reflects helping pre-service teachers set clear goals for students' achievement that depends on their previous attainment, and ensuring that students know what are they doing and the reason to do so. Table 5.2 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.2 Writing instructional objectives category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---|---|
| Writing instructional objectives | "Direct my efforts towards helping learners." (Pre-service teacher 4; DS: interview) |
| | "The first step is to define the goals of the course." (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Data analysis revealed that pre-service teachers are trained to examine the EFL course learning experiences that are logically organised in units. Then, they are trained to construct daily lesson plans keeping in mind the relationship of individual lessons to the larger content of the unit to which the lesson belongs. For example, Lecturer 3 stated that:

"In teaching, it is important to determine what we want our learners to achieve. We ought to consider carefully what we are trying to do when we are teaching a foreign language."

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

This is important as it provides the opportunity to think about how a particular lesson plan fits in with others. This is similar to what was argued by (Jacobsen, 2003; Tenbrink, 2011). Pre-service teachers perceive the importance of writing clear instructional objectives in guiding their steps in the classroom, as Pre-service teacher 3 said:

"[An] Instructional objective helps me plan the lesson steps and direct my effort towards helping learners".

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

When asked about the strategies that were used by microteaching lecturers to train pre-service teachers on writing instructional objectives, Lecturer 1 answered that:

"I trained them to follow some steps when writing instructional objectives. The first step is to define the aims of the course (Second year prep school course). The second step is to transform general statements of course aims into procedural statements of objectives."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Similarly, Lecturer 2 explained her way of training pre-service teachers on how to write instructional objectives:

"I trained pre-service teachers to follow three steps. The first step is to create a stem, for example, by the end of the lesson period, the students will be able to... Then, they need to add a verb to clarify what they need their learners to do. For example, listen, recognise or draw. The last step to do is to specify the final outcome."

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

Another technique of training pre-servicers on writing instructional objectives was declared by Lecturer 5 who trained pre-service teachers by giving them incomplete examples of instructional objectives. When asked about the reasons behind this, she clarified her way of training pre-service teachers saying:

"These objectives are missing one or more of their factors, for example the level of satisfactory performance, or the skills focused on. Adding these missing components back can help correct these objectives by making them more explicit and clear."(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

In reference to what lecturers said, data show that there are different perceptions concerning training pre-service teachers on writing instructional objectives. First, teaching pre-service teachers different examples of good instructional objectives are believed to help them better write their objectives. Second, by addressing the difficulties pre-service teachers could confront when they are trying to write the objectives so that they could avoid them. Such difficulty can be a result of one of the following reasons: first, lack of thought or correct subject matter understanding. Second, inadequate identification of the lesson's essential previous knowledge may lead to students asking many questions and interrupting the lesson, thereby affecting how lesson objectives can be achieved successfully.

To sum up, as revealed by data analysis, there are varied reasons behind lecturers' emphasis on training pre-service teachers on how to write instructional objectives using different ways. First, the powerful role that learning objectives play in achieving the learning outcomes. Second, lecturers think that objectives help pre-service teachers make links between the whole EFL course and its units and lessons. Finally, a good objective can help pre-servicers be focused in their teaching and avoid the numerous problems that they may encounter in their teaching (Gronlund & Brookhart, 2009).

Preparing lesson resources

Analysis of this questionnaire items indicates that 29% of lecturers and 70% of pre-service teachers view preparing lesson resources as one of the focuses of the microteaching course. These percentages are consistent with what the participants expressed in the interviews and reflective journal (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The preparing lesson resources category reflects training pre-service teachers on how to select and prepare different teaching materials. This includes the various aids pre-service teachers can use to teach the lesson. Learning resources comprise: films, tape-recorders, videotapes, audiotapes, slides, models, television, radio, computers, and an endless variety of printed materials such as books, magazines and news-papers. Table 5.3 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.3 Preparing lesson resources category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Preparing lesson resources | <i>"Modern technology in Egyptian schools."</i> (Lecturer 6; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Before preparing and using aids."</i> (Pre-service teacher 11, Pre-service teacher 7; DS: reflective journal) |
| | <i>"Her resources should include sketches or white papers and colours."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"The chance to design slides or printed materials."</i> (Pre-service teacher 15; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Pre-service teachers revealed how learning resources are important. For example, Pre-service teacher 10 said:

"Aids are important as they help us as pre-service teacher to clearly present more new vocabulary items or structures, interest the learners, develop their motivation, and help our students understand better and develop positive attitudes towards EFL learning."
(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: interview)

In line with this, two pre-service teachers added this part of the microteaching session to their reflective journal as a part of their training:

"I have to ask myself the following questions: Which aids are likely to be most effective? Are they varied or attractive enough? Am I making full use of them? Do they make clear the purpose for which they are used? Are they convenient to handle?"

(Pre-service teacher 11, Pre-service teacher 4; Data source: reflective journal)

Additionally, Lecturer 1 spotted one of the common mistakes concerning the relationship between preparing lesson resources and lesson objectives, saying:

"One pre-service teacher identifies her learning objective as:

'Students will be able to draw some pictures, to retell what the lesson story is about.' And because her objective needs learners to draw, so, I expect drawing as one of her planned activities and that her resources should include sketches or white papers and colours but what I noticed is that she was focusing mainly on verbal discussions and asking questions."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals that pre-service teachers lack awareness of the harmony that should exist among objectives, planned activities and outcomes. This is in line with what Ramsden (2003) found about discrepancy between learning resources and the related anticipated learning outcomes as quite usual among pre-service teachers. In relation to preparing lesson resources using modern technology, Lecturer 4 pinpointed its importance, clarifying that:

"EFL pre-service teachers in the Egyptian context are required to teach the EFL syllabus set by the Ministry of Education. This means that they have no choice in the selection of the material, which might not be suitable to their learners' needs."

(Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

As far as the resources used in preparing lessons is concerned, data analysis reveals that Egyptian microteaching lecturers use resources when preparing lessons for several reasons: they have referred to the relationship between lesson resources and achieving objectives and as a result this helps finish the assigned syllabus set by the government. Also, preparing lesson resources using modern technology can be an essential tool for constructing students' knowledge (Dooly, 2009; Masats & Dooly, 2011; Masats, Dooly, & Costa, 2009): with the aid of technology, namely, computers and the internet, authentic English instruction will be brought to the classroom (Reppen, 2010).

After collecting research data, I kept in touch with some of the lecturers and pre-service teachers via online chatting and email, and all of them assured me that the process of preparing lesson resources involves some problems, such as: large classes; the lack of funds, resources and equipment that are essential for the process of designing and preparing lesson resources; and finally, lecturers' busy schedules that do not allow them time to help the pre-service teachers.

5.2.2 Lesson implementation skills

The second theme of the microteaching course's focuses at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education is lesson implementation skills. Analysis of the data revealed that this theme is comprised of two sub-themes: lesson introductory skills and lesson presentation skills. The lesson presentation skills sub-theme comprises of two core categories: ELT skills and classroom performance skills, as shown in the following Figure 5.3:

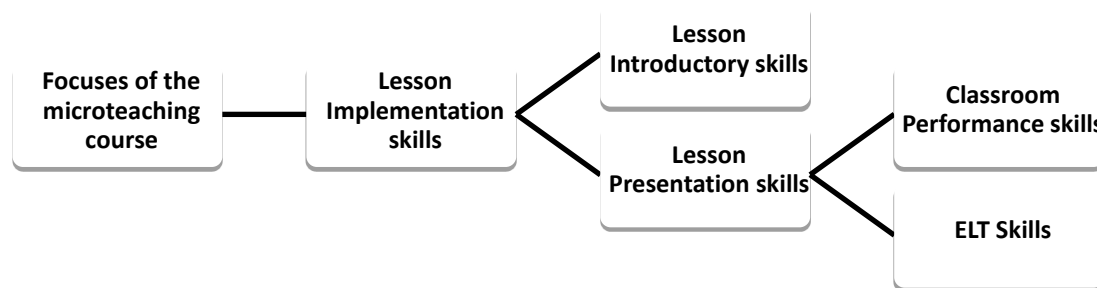


Figure 5.3 Lesson implementation skills theme and sub-themes

According to the findings of the current study, this is the most important stage of the lesson. It contains, in detail, the content; the material to be taught (what to teach) and how (the method and procedures) it is to be taught. For example, Lecturer 1 said:

“To teach the content pre-service teachers should present the new vocabulary items and structures before teaching the lesson so as to help pupils understand it. With this in mind, in presenting vocabulary, structures and the lesson, pre-service teachers should use various methods and techniques.”

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

5.2.2.1 Lesson introductory skills

The first sub-theme comprises of one category, that is set induction, which is concerned with the devices pre-service teachers use to prepare the students for a lesson.

Set Induction

Results of the current study questionnaires indicated that 14% of lecturers and 81% of pre-service teachers practise set induction during the microteaching sessions. This was also shown in the comments of the study participants during interview and reflective journal as they (i.e. 7 out of 15 pre-service teachers and 2 lecturers out of 7 during interviews, and 9 pre-service teachers' journals out of 15) declared that it was practised in the course. The set induction category reflects starting the actual teaching of a lesson to attract the attention of the learners, prepare their minds and motivate them to receive the new knowledge in a natural and spontaneous way. Table 5.4 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.4 Set induction category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------------|--|
| Set induction | <i>"I trained pre-service teachers to start their lesson using the socialised review."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I concentrated on oral review tests where learners at the beginning of lesson are asked some questions."</i> (Lecturer 2; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Providing an introductory outline of the lesson."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I started by greeting my learners."</i> (Pre-service teacher 2; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The above examples of coded data show the various devices to start the lesson that have been practised in the course. Asking one of the pre-servicers about set induction, Pre-service teacher 14 illustrated how set induction was practised during the course sessions:

"In my micro-lesson I started by greeting my learners. Then I did a quick revision to warm them up and provided an introductory outline of the lesson."

(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: interview)

In line with that, Pre-service teacher 6 outlined in the interview that he followed some steps to start his lesson during practicum. He said:

“First, I greet the class saying ‘Good morning everyone’ or ‘Hi everyone’, then I check attendance and see who is absent today and what is wrong with him. Then I use oral questions to test students’ previous knowledge about the new lesson.”

(Pre-service teacher 6; Data source: interview)

In harmony with that an activity was added to the pre-service teachers’ reflective journal as the documentary evidence assured me that set induction was one of the skills addressed in the course.

Activity: Choose a lesson of a second year preparatory and mention how you could start your lesson and motivate your learners.

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: reflective journal)

Generally, microteaching lecturers focus on set induction for many reasons, as previously shown. The set induction techniques carried out in the microteaching course are only limited to review, to stimulate the learners and warm them up. There are many other techniques that are neglected in the course, as there are different devices for introducing a lesson such as story-telling, role playing or using audio-visual aids. These devices help make learning more effective, more meaningful and more lasting and facilitate the transfer of learning to subsequent learning situations.

5.2.2.2 Lesson presentation skills

The second subtheme of lesson implementation skills is lesson presentation skills. This sub-theme refers to a variety of skills that help teachers to deliver the EFL lesson to their students. It comprises two core categories: ELT skills and classroom performance skills. Classroom performance skills include: silence and non-verbal clues, explaining skills, reinforcement skills, increasing students’ participation, questioning skills, and classroom management techniques.

5.2.2.2.1 Classroom performance skills

This refers to the technical skills that help teachers communicate effectively with their students in the classroom to achieve the intended goals of the teaching-learning process. Teachers can use some performance techniques such as body language, stimulus variations or questioning.

Silence and non-verbal clues

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirmed that 80% of pre-service teachers and 14% of lecturers considered silence and non-verbal clues as a focus in the microteaching course. Data showed that lecturers' low percentage might be because some of them give this skill special attention while others focus on it only when there is a need. This is consistent with what data analysis of the interview and reflective journal revealed about silence and non-verbal clues (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The silence and non-verbal clues category reflects the practice of using gestures and facial expressions to communicate with students to help them understand better. Table 5.5 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.5 Silence and non-verbal clues category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Silence and Non-verbal clues | <i>"Gestures are very helpful in presenting language items."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"The verb "fly" which can be presented by imitating a bird with one's hands."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"The verbs "sleep" and "wake up" are presented by acting them out."</i> (Lecturer 2; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The use of silence and non-verbal clues in the microteaching course was for its importance in communication, as Lecturer 1 said:

"Words tend to have limitations and pre-service teachers need non-verbal signs that can save their time and effort when for example explaining shapes or giving directions."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Additionally, he said:

“Non-verbal clues are especially important in Egypt as English is usually taught as a foreign language and learners have linguistic inadequacies. Using non-verbal clues helps students understand and avoids communication breakdown.”

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

In agreement with this, Pre-service teacher 10 illustrated in her reflective journal how non-verbal clues are helpful in managing large classes. She said:

“One cannot talk about classroom management without referring to the use of gestures especially when dealing with large classes such as is the case of most Egyptian classes. The use of gestures may be a good solution. Such as be quiet, stop, and listen to me. Gestures can also be used for providing positive feedback for students like the “thumb up”.

(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: reflective journal)

As evidence of having gestures and non-verbal clues as a focus in the microteaching course, Pre-service teacher 14 added this documentary evidence in his reflective journal:

Activity: Try to think about the ways by which you can catch students’ attention or encourage their involvement in the lesson by using gestures and non-verbal clues such as facial expressions.

(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: reflective journal)

Data analysis revealed that Egyptian lecturers focus on non-verbal clues for the following reasons: using non-verbal clues makes pre-service teachers aware of the importance of the non-verbal aspect of communication in the EFL classroom; using silence and non-verbal cues can help decrease teachers’ talking time; eye contact and facial expressions are important for an effective classroom interaction.

Skill of explaining

Analysis of the data revealed that the skill of explanation was one of the focuses reported by the study participants. Analysis of the questionnaire’s items in Table 5.1 shows that 80% of pre-service teachers and 14% of lecturers indicated that the explanation skill was a focus in the microteaching course. This percentage from the pre-service teachers was inconsistent with what they revealed at the interview and in the reflective journal (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The explaining category aims at making it easy for learners to

understand difficult things by answering the questions “why”, “how” and “what”. Explaining could be through the use of voice, pausing, repetition, paraphrasing or verbal cueing, or using examples. Table 5.6 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.6 Explaining skills category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------|---|
| Explaining skills | <i>“I always advise my pre-service teachers that examples should be simple such as stories, or concrete objects.”</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>“I have asked pre-service teachers to use examples in a micro-lesson.”</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about explaining as a focus in the microteaching course, Lecturer 1 clarified that:

“Effective explanation depends on the use of examples, which are crucial to teaching new concepts, and having feedback because it tells us if the learners have understood the lesson or not. There are two approaches to the use of examples: inductive approach that begins with examples to reach generalization and encourage creative thinking. The other one is the deductive approach that begins with the generalization first, then apply it to a number of examples.”

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

As evidence of explaining skills being a focus in the microteaching course, Pre-service teacher 2 added this documentary evidence to her reflective journal:

“In your group, plan a ten-minute micro-lesson that should include explanations skills and giving examples. Each pre-service teacher has a turn to teach a lesson while the others observe him.”

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: reflective journal)

Data analysis revealed how the practice of explaining skills is dealt with in the microteaching course. Favouring the inductive approach could indicate that pre-service teachers and their lecturers were aware of the value of giving students a space to improve their thinking skills. However, lecturers devote less time to the skill of explanation as it is taught in a separate course entitled “Curricula and Methods of Teaching” at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education that deals with the different ways of practising such an important skill.

Increasing learners' participation

Results of the current study questionnaire pinpointed that 50% of lecturers and 66% of pre-service teachers believed that the lecturers' focus was on increasing learners' participation, which refers to the ways by which teachers help learners to interact and actively participate in the classroom. Data analysis of the interview and the reflective journal revealed that 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal said that increasing students' participation was practised in the course. Table 5.7 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.7 Increasing learners' participation category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---|--|
| Increasing learners' participation | <i>"Classroom interaction is excellent because we have to actively work together."</i> (Pre-service teacher 15; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Exchanging opinions and discussion that help students learn."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"They won't participate actively in the classroom and even will not like to go to school again."</i> (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Data revealed that increasing students' participation skills are limited to questions and answers and discussion. Two lecturers have reported training pre-service teachers on the question and answer technique. For example, Lecturer 1 said:

"I encourage pre-service teachers to ask questions and give time to students to think, answer and interact. I think this technique is useful for training pre-service teachers on as it elicits students' answers and enable them to be active participants in EL classes."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

In addition to questions and answers, discussion as a technique for increasing students' participation was practised in the course. For example, Lecturer 3 said:

"First, I trained pre-service teachers to use brainstorming before speaking about a topic to encourage discussion. Another way is to write topics on the board and help them discuss the ideas in groups, giving students the chance to choose whatever they want, keeping in mind involving both males and females in the discussion."

(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

Learning environment was another reason to focus on increasing students' participation. For example, Pre-service teacher 1 said:

"It is very important for the students to ask when they need to as this means that they are relaxed, and they know that they are free and can express themselves freely."

(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: interview)

Accepting learners' opinions and respecting their initiatives could also result in increasing students' participation in a relaxed open learning environment where learners could express themselves freely, and this could ultimately lead to a more favourable classroom learning environment. For instance, Pre-service teacher 14 stated:

"When students feel that their opinions are valuable, they will love the class and they will be waiting for the teacher to come."

(Name: Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: reflective journal)

Another pre-service teacher voiced his concern about ignoring how to deal with an error or a mistake that could happen during the discussion and that could interrupt the flow of the discussion in the classroom and decrease students' participation. In this context, Pre-service teacher 2 said:

"All of us make mistakes while learning EFL because we are not native speakers. Those mistakes should help us to learn and not be against our learning. But, I still feel I need to practice more dealing with students' mistakes during the discussion. Should I stop to correct the error or continue the discussion and correct the errors later?"

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: interview)

Obviously, the above extracts reveal two important points: first, the majority of participants highlight the role of the learning environment in increasing learners' participation and that learning should be characterised with respect, freedom, and acceptance. Second, pre-service teachers are aware of the fact that it is normal for learners to make errors while learning. However, learners need to be encouraged to consider mistakes as an opportunity for them to learn, to build their characters and appreciate their contributions.

Reinforcement skills

Forty-three per cent of pre-service teachers and 29% of lecturers in questionnaires have reported that reinforcement is one of the focuses in the microteaching course. This percentage is consistent with what they revealed in the interview and the reflective journal (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The reinforcement category is concerned with using different techniques by which the teacher can give feedback to the learners concerning his actions for the purpose of correcting or modifying his behaviour. Also, reinforcement may be positive or negative. Table 5.8 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.8 Reinforcement category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------------|---|
| Reinforcement | <i>"Encouraging students by statements like, 'good; that is excellent' and certain non-verbal expressions, as smiling, nodding the head or paying attention to the responding student."</i> (Lecturer 2; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Putting thumb up or writing the correct answer on the board."</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"This behaviour discourages students' participation for fear of giving wrong answers."</i> (Lecturer 6; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about the techniques used in the course to train pre-service teachers on the use of reinforcement skills, Lecturer 7 said:

"Pre-service teachers have been advised that positive reinforcement could be verbal or non-verbal. The positive verbal reinforcement could be using words and phrases like, 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent', repeating or rephrasing a student's response, and using prompts such as 'think again' or 'carry on' to help the student give a correct response."
(Lecturer 7; Data source: interview)

Almost all participants were in support of reinforcing students' learning. During the interview, pre-service teachers highlighted the importance of corrective feedback. In this context, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

"What I really benefited from and found new is corrective feedback as that kind of negative feedback is called the corrective one. As sometimes you don't want to say 'wrong' to students, you can use this kind of feedback that gives you the chance to praise the students when they 'have wrong answers by saying, for example, 'good try'." (Pre-service teacher 14; Data source:

interview)

The above extracts reveal that most pre-service teachers are cognisant of the importance of the positive and corrective feedback for encouraging students to learn and participate effectively in the classroom. Egyptian lecturers focus on reinforcement for the following reasons: first, reinforcement positively enhances learners' confidence as well as modifying their behaviour (Singh, 2007). Second, absence of reinforcement can result in learners not trying and trying. Putting the importance of reinforcement in mind, teachers should be aware of the students who need to be pushed further in their learning by giving them more encouragement and praise.

Questioning skills

Analysis of the questionnaire item in Table 5.1 signifies that 7% of lecturers and 84% of pre-service teachers showed that questioning skills were practised as one of the focuses in the microteaching course. As revealed by data analysis, contradiction between pre-service teachers' and lecturers' percentages might be due to pre-service teachers' misunderstanding of the way this skill was practised in the course. This is consistent with what they revealed at the interview and the reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 1 lecturer out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The questioning category reflects encouraging thinking and students' active participation, checking on teachers' clarity, maintaining classroom control, and emphasizing key points. Table 5.9 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.9 Questioning category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------|--|
| Questioning | <i>"Referential questions create lovely interaction climate in the classroom."</i> (Pre-service teacher 9; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Prompting is to assist students by giving them aiding words to help them think about the answer."</i> (Lecturer 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"To make them work out the answers in pairs or groups."</i> (Pre-service teacher 15; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about questioning skills, Lecturer 3 said:

“In the course, we focused on two kinds of questions: display questions that are used to test knowledge explicitly stated in a text, and referential questions that require students to think and infer knowledge implicitly stated.”(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

On this subject, pre-service Teacher 2 said that she prefers using referential questions rather than display questions. She said that:

“I like students to think hard to find the answers which are not found in their books. Also, I can’t say that these answers are right or wrong, so I can hear different ideas and opinions.”

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: interview)

The previous extract reveals pre-service teachers’ awareness of the significance of using referential questions in class, as they help students to think carefully on the topic, and therefore enhance their reasoning skills.

When asked about the reasoning behind the lecturers’ questionnaire low percentage on this item, Lecturer 5 said:

“From my experience, Egyptian teachers are likely to interrupt the students’ right after the question is asked and not wait before interfering by answering the questions, asking another question or criticising students’ silence. It is the Egyptian culture that ignores questioning and even tries to inhibit it.”

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

When asked about the strategy used to help pre-service teachers use questioning skills, Lecturer 3 said:

I trained pre-service teachers on using a question cycle that begins with asking the question then a period of silence and if there is no response, the pre-service teacher has to simplify the question and wait for the students’ answer and finally discuss the answer. Also, I always advise them to distribute questions evenly through class, avoid asking the bright ones and that they should wait for learners’ mental processing time.”

(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

The previous extract reveals incorporating the proper use of waiting time in training pre-service teachers on questioning skills. This is in line with some research findings that highlighted the importance of “wait time”: if the students are

given a suitable wait time, their correct responses will be improved (Nunan, 2004; Shomooss, 2009).

As evidence of the practice of questioning skills as a focus in the microteaching course one pre-service teacher added this documentary evidence to his reflective journal:

Teacher: What can you tell me from the reading passage about Mona's attitude to school?

Student: I don't know.

Teacher: OK, what did Mona do on her way to school?

Student: She stopped to play with the cat.

Teacher: What else did she do?

Student: She tried to catch a butterfly.

Teacher: Do you remember when she went to school?

Student: She was late.

Teacher: OK, try to think about your behaviour if you were late for school?

Student: I'll walk to school straight away.

Teacher: So, if you compare your behaviour with Mona's, can this give you a clue about her attitude to school?

(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

To sum up, data analysis revealed that Egyptian lecturers focus on questioning skills because of their awareness of pre-service teachers' needs for such a skill. However, they devote less time for questioning as it is taught in a separate course entitled "TEFL methodology" at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education that deals with the different ways of using and teaching questioning skills. Also, from a cultural perspective, in the Egyptian educational system, questions are only for testing and not to motivate learners to think, interact and participate.

Skill of stimulus variation

Analysis of data revealed that the skill of stimulus variation was one of the focuses reported by the study participants. Analysis of this questionnaire item in Table 5.1 shows that 14% of pre-service teachers and 68% of lecturers indicated that stimulus variation is a focus in the microteaching course. As revealed by the data analysis, the lecturers' high percentage might be because they didn't want to lose face in front of me, first as a researcher and second as their colleague by saying that this skill was not frequently practised in the course. This is consistent with what they revealed at the interview and the reflective journal (i.e. 3 pre-service

teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The questioning category reflects securing and sustaining students' attention for the success of any lesson. Table 5.10 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.10 Stimulus Variation Category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------------|--|
| Stimulus Variation | <i>"I helped my pre-service teachers to apply movements' change in class such as from writing on the blackboard to explain a picture."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"The students will be bored, thus it is important to continuously change medium to keep students active and involved in the lesson."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Teacher talks to whole class, teacher talks to student, and student talks to student."</i> (Lecturer 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The course aimed at helping pre-servicers avoid teaching styles that make students feel bored. In this context, Lecturer 5 said:

"A stimulus situation that changes in different ways is one of the most powerful influences in keeping students active. This can be done by careful planning of the teaching materials that the teacher is going to use during the lesson."

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

When asked about the techniques used to assist pre-service teachers when using stimulus variation skills, Lecturer 2 said:

"Oral-visual switching was another technique used in the microteaching course. Pre-service teachers were trained on moving from talking verbally about something to using maps or charts visually. This is important as pre-service teachers cannot depend only on one medium whether oral or visual for a long time."

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

Two more techniques of stimulus variation were revealed by pre-service teachers: a change in speech pattern, and a change in interaction style. For example, Pre-service teacher 8 said:

"In order to emphasise a particular point, I tried to do sudden changes in my tone of voice in my speech pattern to make the students attentive and create interest in the lesson."

(Pre-service teacher 8; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Pre-service teacher 3 said:

“In the Egyptian classroom teachers tend to speak too much and this leads students to feel bored. Change in interaction style helps all types of interaction to go side by side to sustain students’ attention.”
(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

Almost all participants voiced their concern about the Egyptian classroom’s lack of modern technology needed in teaching that is valuable to stimulate learners’ interest and to provide a favourable learning environment. And that the Egyptian microteaching labs or classrooms need to be fully equipped with the basic technology that can help students practise such skills. For example, one pre-service teacher stated:

“English should be taught using computers, CDs, intelligent boards, because I need to show my learners some pictures, sounds, examples, so I can benefit from the new technology to achieve stimulus variation in class. An issue which is missing in most Egyptian classrooms is that our classrooms are not equipped with even a projector.” (Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: reflective journal)

Classroom management techniques

Analysing the questionnaire item in Table 5.1 confirms that 21% of lecturers and 86% of pre-service teachers considered classroom management techniques as a focus in the microteaching course. This is inconsistent with what participants revealed in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The classroom management techniques category reflects getting students to respond positively to teachers’ instructions and having them engaged in lesson activities and tasks. Table 5.11 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.11 Classroom management techniques category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Classroom management techniques | <i>“With one of the trouble-makers I tried to talk with them aiming at building a good relationship with them.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>“Pre-service teachers together with learners, set practice rules do and do not.”</i> (Lecturer 4; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Three techniques of classroom management were used in the course: asking challenging questions, leniency, and setting rules for classroom practice. Asking challenging questions was favoured because it had the power of managing the classroom. For example, Lecturer 5 commented:

“Asking challenging questions is a facilitating task management. When some students don’t get the idea, they just start chatting. Asking questions especially the referential questions that need more time on the part of learners to think and reply will give pre-service teachers a chance to manage their classrooms.” (Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

An alternative way to control the class is to be patient and confer with the trouble-makers. For example, one pre-service teacher revealed in her reflective journal how she followed a more lenient approach with her learners in which she discussed the issue with those learners who made discipline problems. She stated:

“In practicum, I tried to be patient and not to lose my temper inside the classroom. This way worked with me and the students began to behave, so I think it is very important for classroom management to make good relations with the trouble-makers.”

(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

Setting rules for practice was a third way of classroom management. This classroom management device is based on setting rules for practice agreed upon by pre-service teachers and their students. This fair and democratic approach to classroom management, according to one participant, would be favourable to the learners as Lecturer 2 stated:

“It is too difficult for learners to accept the imposed rules, so from the very beginning of the year, pre-service teachers and learners share in putting the rules themselves. This involvement could lead to a shared responsibility and thus decrease the burden of classroom management upon the shoulders of pre-service teachers.”

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

When asked about their low percentage in the questionnaire concerning management skills, Lecturer 6 said:

“Management skills need time to be practised and sessions’ time was limited and not enough for practising management.”

(Lecturer 6; Data source: interview)

The above extracts revealed the discrepancy between participants' questionnaire percentages and their views expressed in the interview and reflective journal. There could be a number of reasons for this. First, pre-service teachers change their classes every week and perhaps could not gain enough information about a specific group of learners, so they may face new situations and dilemmas every time they taught. In the long run, that point could be considered an advantage as it helped in spreading the extent of the pre-service teachers' knowledge and abilities to deal with various situations and types of learners. Second, a remarkable portion of the classroom management skills relies on the personality of pre-service teachers, and their personal traits, and depending on personality may require a considerable amount of time to be acquired. Third, each teaching situation is a unique opportunity to practise skills, so it is rather difficult for them to stabilise their classroom management level as it is sometimes affected by circumstances beyond pre-service teachers' control, such as social conditions and psychological stress. To sum up, classroom management skills are characterised by the likelihood that they will develop once the pre-service teacher has acquired the basic knowledge needed and has practised them on their own according to the opportunities they are given. The more opportunities pre-service teachers have to practise, the more positive they will be regarding managing their classes and handling problematic situations.

5.2.2.2.2 EFL teaching skills

This core category refers to practising the EFL four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills include associated skills, such as vocabulary learning, spelling, and pronunciation. If these language skills are effectively integrated, EFL students can communicate successfully. Five categories were constructed representing views with regard to areas related to EFL teaching: writing skills, oral skills, reading skills, new vocabulary and grammar.

Grammar

Analysis of the data revealed that grammar was one of the focuses reported by the study participants. Analysis of this questionnaire item showed that 63% of pre-service teachers and 36% of lecturers indicated that grammar is a focus in the

microteaching sessions. Despite this relatively low percentage, analysis of the qualitative data shows how grammar is taught and why it is a focus from the perspectives of pre-servicers as well as their lecturers. Five out of fifteen pre-service teachers declared in the interviews that their microteaching lecturers trained them on how to teach grammar throughout the course while only 2 lecturers confirmed grammar to be a focus in the course. The grammar category reflects explaining when and why certain EFL structures and rules apply. Table 5.12 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.12 Grammar category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------|--|
| Grammar | <i>"I always try to introduce the structure through the context."</i> (Lecturer 5; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I let them read the examples which contain many present tense expressions."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about grammar as a focus of the microteaching course, Pre-service teacher 14 revealed during the interview that:

"We have learned to teach new structure with examples until learners elicit the grammatical rule by themselves and this could make students more active while learning how the language works."
(Pre-service teachers 14; Data source: interview)

In agreement with that, a grammatical activity that was included in a pre-service teachers' reflective journal revealed that grammar was a focus in the microteaching course:

Activity: Select a lesson from first or second unit from preparatory text book two, identify the grammatical structure you believe your students did not study and mention how you could present it.
(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

Favouring inductive grammar teaching was seen as a device for maintaining students' learning. This informed the pre-service teachers' decision to present grammatical structures in context and encouraged learners to go beyond the level of recall when learning structures, to the levels of comprehension and application. This helps develop their intellectual abilities instead of overemphasising explicit grammar teaching.

Data analysis revealed how the practice of teaching grammar is dealt with in the microteaching course. Favouring inductive grammar teaching could indicate that pre-service teachers and their lecturers were aware of the value of not teaching grammatical rules directly but leaving their learners to discover the rules, from their experience of using the language to enable students to learn actively and not waiting for the pre-service teacher to feed them with the form of the rule. Instead, they had to exert an effort to identify the grammatical structure. Furthermore, in presenting grammar in this way, the pre-service teacher made language functional because learners knew that they were required not only to recognise the form of the structure, but also to use it in a meaningful way.

In reference to the inconsistency between what the participants said in the interviews and the questionnaires' results, Egyptian lecturers focus on grammar because of their awareness of pre-service teachers' needs to know how to correctly teach grammar. However, they devote less time for grammar as it is taught in a separate course entitled "Phonetics and Grammar" at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education, in addition to a TEFL methodology course that deals with the different ways of teaching grammar.

New vocabulary

Analysis of the questionnaire item indicated that 61% of pre-service teachers and 57% of lecturers view teaching new vocabulary as one of the focuses in the microteaching course. These percentages are consistent with the participants' views as expressed in the interviews and reflective journals (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The teaching of new vocabulary category reflects that practising vocabulary develops learners' abilities to explore, understand and use EFL multiple-meaning words in different contexts. Table 5.13 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.13 New vocabulary category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------|---|
| New vocabulary | <i>"Memorising word list and looking up new words in the dictionary."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I explain the new words by using miming, or acting; I can also use drawing, or wall sheets."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"One part of the lesson should involve predicting/guessing meaning from context."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Teaching new vocabulary as a focus was mentioned by the study participants interviewed as being essential for EFL learners. Lecturer 1 commented that:

"Vocabulary is involved in all language skills and aspects. Using context, giving examples, miming or acting, gestures, facial expressions, antonyms and synonyms, real objects, drawing, wall charts, pictures, flashcards and the dictionary were favoured in the course as they helped learners maintain learning by exerting a mental effort while learning."

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Lecturer 5 added that the focusing on new vocabulary is due to its importance in removing lexical problems:

"Lexical problems impede comprehension and result in communication breakdown in various areas of the school curriculum."

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals that the microteaching lecturers focus on training pre-service teachers on teaching new vocabulary for diverse reasons, including that they are responsive to the needs of the pre-servicers who have not been trained how to teach new vocabulary before. Vocabulary constitutes the building blocks of language; learners cannot communicate or convey their ideas clearly without words. So it can be confirmed that teaching new vocabulary is one of the focuses in the microteaching course. A vocabulary activity used in the microteaching sessions was added to one of the reflective journals as evidence to support the claim that new vocabulary was a focus in microteaching at Shebin Elkom faculty of education.

Activity: Prepare a plan for teaching new vocabulary according to the following general guidelines. One part of the lesson should involve predicting/guessing meaning from context. Introduce this activity with a "warm-up" section designed to heighten the learners' interest in the prediction task.

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: reflective journal)

To sum up, Egyptian microteaching lecturers focus on practising new vocabulary for several reasons: they want to engage learners in more meaningful vocabulary learning; also, teaching new vocabulary frequently used in English would in turn increase one's understanding of the language socially, academically and vocationally (Nippold & Duthie, 2003). So, university lecturers want their learners to get to grips with teaching new vocabulary and its importance in language learning, especially as future EFL teachers.

Oral skills

Analysis of the questionnaire item related to oral skills indicates that 54% of pre-service teachers and 50% of lecturers view oral skills as one of the focuses in the microteaching course. The aims of teaching EFL listening and speaking were highlighted as elements of oral skills during interviews and reflective journal as indicated by study participants (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The oral skills category reflects practising developing learners' ability to listen to understand, and communicate in the foreign language. Table 5.14 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.14 Oral skills category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-------------|---|
| Oral skills | <i>"Learners need to have a previous idea about what they are going to listen to."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Students should have the chance to make a conversation."</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Form dialogues with each other in front of the class."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Practise role-play in different situations."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

In microteaching sessions the pre-service teachers were trained to use situations or role-play, as Lecturer 1 said:

"Teaching listening skills that are the basis for developing oral communication are 'situations'."
(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

When asked about the reasons of choosing this approach, Lecturer 2 commented:

“Teaching through ‘situations’ makes learners alert during the class as situations make them feel self-motivated to share and become self-confident at the same time. In addition, using situations connects learners with both language and real life problems.”

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

A variety of activities to support learners’ understanding of a listening passage was a focus in the microteaching course. For example, Lecturer 3 prefers to start teaching students to listen by presenting the new vocabulary which might hinder their listening comprehension. She also prefers to introduce the listening topic to give learners an idea about it. She stated:

“Introducing the listening topic serves as an advance step to direct learners’ attention during listening.”

(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

Defining the purpose each time learners listen to the passage was also highlighted to let learners familiarise themselves with the content of listening. This purpose was highlighted by Lecturer 4 who stated:

“In the first time, learners grasp the whole meaning of a passage. They listen again to answer the questions. The questions are of different kinds. Some of them are ‘listen and complete’ some missing words. Other kinds of questions ‘listen and point’ to some special pictures, or some special words, and then ‘listen and do’.” (Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

When asked about that, her justification for this approach was to facilitate students’ learning. She said:

“It is also seen necessary not to push the learners to the feeling of frustration if they are over-challenged with listening to questions they could not answer.” (Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Pre-service teacher 11 wrote in his reflective journal how he practises the listening skills with his students in practicum:

“First of all, I give the learners a general idea about the items they are going to listen to, so I let them listen for the first time without doing anything, then I give them some questions on the blackboard and let them listen again to answer the simple questions I wrote on the blackboard to make sure that they get something.”

(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

Along with that, the use of warm-up activities, such as using pre-listening questions, was seen as an important stage to get learners involved in practicum. For example, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

“Through the pre-listening questions, they can approach what they are going to listen to, and become interested. I start with asking my students some questions to refresh them, and to make a warm up about the topic in the listening topic.”

(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: interview)

As for speaking, the aim was to enable learners to express themselves in English with the help of the activities in the official EFL curriculum. A variety of activities were highlighted that could help learners develop their EFL speaking skills. For example, Lecturer 4 referred to question-answer exchanges between pre-service teachers and their students as another way of encouraging learners to speak. She stated:

“In the speaking activities such as question-answer exchanges, learners negotiate their ideas and their views among each other and develop their speaking skills.” (Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

The above extract shows that the lecturers were trying to help pre-service teachers improve their learners’ speaking skills in spite of the fact that this skill was not tested in the final year exam. Also, they tried to encourage the learners to speak English as much as possible.

Writing skills

Results from the current study’s questionnaires pinpointed that only 43% of lecturers and 55% of pre-service teachers perceive writing skills as a focus of the microteaching course. As revealed by data analysis of the interviews and reflective journals, the lecturers’ percentage is lower than that of pre-service teachers due to being taught by more than one microteaching lecturer. Also, participants’ views about the writing skills as a focus in the microteaching course were specific and explicit (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The writing skills category reflects practising helping learners transfer their ideas from mind to paper. Elements of difficulty are related to writing, such as punctuation and spelling. Table 5.15 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.15 Writing skills category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------|---|
| Writing skills | <i>"Helping their students decrease their spelling mistakes."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Miss the punctuation marks or misuse them."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I face problems with words that are pronounced the same."</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"I don't know how to use punctuation marks such as the colon, the semi colon, the dash, and the hyphen."</i> (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Lecturer 2 referred to giving pre-service teachers hand-outs full of punctuation rules to be self-studied to avoid the main punctuation mistakes that pre-service teachers often make, which are related to capitalisation, and lack of punctuation marks. When asked about the reason for doing that she clarified:

"Punctuation is one of the problems students face while writing because it is different from the Arabic system. Therefore, I wanted to bring to my pre-service teachers' attention that correctly punctuated sentences and paragraphs are very significant in the teaching of writing."
(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

In relation to that, two pre-service teachers voiced their concern about their knowledge of the punctuation marks and rules in their reflective journal. For example, Pre-service teacher 13 said:

"I use the punctuation marks that I know to avoid any problems but honestly, I don't have a clear idea about the different kinds of punctuation marks."
(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: reflective journal)

The above extracts reveal Egyptian pre-servicers' weakness in punctuation and spelling. Some of the reasons that might account for this are as follows: Egyptian English language teachers do not correct punctuation mistakes as they focus on content rather than form. Further, Egyptian learners are educated not to self-develop their aspects of difficulty in language learning. They are used to being spoon-fed in whatever they learn at the pre-university stages and extend this to university level. Additionally, most learners do not revise what they write, which leads to punctuation and spelling errors. Finally, the fact that the English punctuation system is very different from that in Arabic could be another reason.

There are many reasons behind the difference in percentage between pre-service teachers and their lecturers as revealed by data analysis: Egyptian microteaching lecturers devoted little time to teaching writing as they thought that learning to write seems to be more demanding and laborious than any other skill (Boscolo, 2009, p. 300). Gaining writing skills requires practice and learning through experience and should be integrated with other skills (Arikan, 2006) and this is available to pre-service teachers through a separate course, namely EFL writing, taught to the pre-service teachers in the faculty of education.

Reading skills

Analysis of this questionnaire item highlighted that 43% of lecturers and 54% of pre-service teachers showed that reading skills are considered one of the focuses in the microteaching course. This percentage of the lecturers is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturer out of 7 in their interview and 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The reading skills category reflects the practice of helping learners actively trying to comprehend a written text. Table 5.16 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.16 Reading skills category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------|---|
| Reading skills | <i>"Help learners to predict and preview."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"To guess what is going to come next by using text clues such as vocabulary or grammar."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"To practice guessing and predicting skills."</i> (Lecturer 2; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about the strategies that pre-service teachers have been taught on the microteaching course, Lecturer 5 clarified:

"We encourage pre-service teachers to use previewing as a device that aids them find out what the text will be about before reading it."
(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

On this subject, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

"When I did reading exercises at practicum, I gave students some ideas to make it easier for them to predict successfully such as looking at the title or the picture of the reading passage and guessing the story title and its settings and sequence." (Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: interview)

Another pre-service teacher clarified:

“In one of the microteaching sessions and after guessing what the reading passage will be about, I stopped reading the story and asked the pretending students to guess what will happen next. I did that to give them as many chances as possible to practise guessing and predicting skills.”

(Pre-service teacher 8; Data source: reflective journal)

The previous extracts reveals justified practices that reflected an informed decision from the two pre-service teachers indicating their recognition of the importance of helping students focus on the predefined cognitive skills of previewing and predicting and this was evident in their classroom teaching practices. This showed that they were goal-oriented. And in doing so, they were keen on maximizing the benefit out of the learning situation. In reference to reading skills, microteaching lecturers devoted little time to reading skills as there is a separate course for that purpose called “Reading Comprehension”. They just gave pre-service teachers some principles to help them understand how to proceed with their teaching of good reading to support their future teaching at school. In addition, gaining a strong basis that will help them understand how to practise different reading skills and differentiate between poor and good reading practices such as those based on learner-active roles in the classroom (Nation, 2009), and using more cognitive and thinking skills (Rueda, 2011).

5.2.3 Lesson evaluation skills

The last theme of the microteaching course focuses at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt is comprised of four categories: lesson closure (how to end the lesson), providing feedback to individual learners, discussing students’ language learning needs, and collecting evidence to monitor learners’ progress, as shown in the following Figure 5.4:

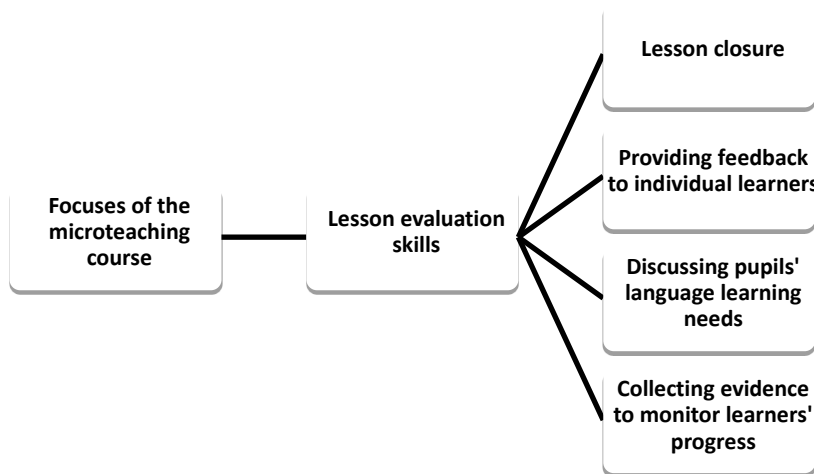


Figure 5.4 Lesson evaluation skills theme

Lesson closure

Analysing the questionnaire items in Table 5.1 confirms that 7% of lecturers and 75% of pre-service teachers considered lesson closure as a frequent focus in the microteaching course. As revealed by data analysis, this difference in percentage might be because pre-service teachers record what was observed in the course irrespective of the way it was practised in the sessions. This is consistent with what the participants revealed in the interviews and the reflective journals (i.e. 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 1 lecturer out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The lesson closure techniques category reflects pre-service teachers setting aside three to five minutes at the end of the lesson for closure. Table 5.17 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.17 Lesson closure category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------|--|
| Lesson Closure | <i>"The end of a learning session."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Saying goodbye at the end aims at strengthen the relationships among students and their teachers."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The main purpose is to signal the end and the fulfilment of the lesson objectives. In this context, Lecturer 3 said:

“The end of a lesson is an appropriate time for students to read, start homework, or chat quietly. During closure, the instructor should summarise, analyse, evaluate and reflect on what has been learned during the lesson.”
(Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

When asked about achieving lesson closure, one of the pre-service teachers revealed in the interview how he practised lesson closure in the sessions:

“In order to close a lesson, I review the main points which have been taught in a brief way. Then, I go back to the main question of the lesson for the purpose of checking if the new knowledge is correctly gained.”
(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: interview)

Another pre-service teacher added to his reflective journal as documentary evidence some examples of closure questions that are used to close the lesson:

“What did we learn from today’s lesson? Another thing pre-service teachers can use if they don’t have much time to ask questions, is to ask students to think and write down a word or concept they learned from today’s lesson.”
(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

The above extract reveals that the lesson closure skill was practised in the course but it was only limited to recalling main facts, skills or ideas covered in the lesson. It did not include attempts by the pre-service teachers to see whether understanding or learning has occurred or express opinions about the value of what was done and teaching effectiveness. This is in line with what Finch (2002) concluded about assessment: that it helps the teacher to evaluate the students’ performance and the effectiveness of the teacher’s effort. Data analysis also revealed that closure skills in Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education were only related to how to end the lesson. However, closure should also be used after each section of the lesson such as after listening to a story or finishing some exercises, for the purpose of formative assessment (Sharma & Joshi, 2006).

Feedback to individual learners

The second focus in the lesson evaluation skill theme is lecturers' focus on helping pre-service teachers give feedback to individual learners. This was confirmed by the study participants. Analysis of the questionnaire item in table 5.1 indicates that 40% of pre-service teachers and 71% of lecturers view feedback to individual learners as one of the focuses in the microteaching course. As revealed by data analysis, the lecturers' higher percentage might be because some lecturers don't want to appear that they lack knowledge in front of me as their colleague. This is consistent with the participants' views as expressed in the interviews and the reflective journals (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 5 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The feedback to individual learners' category reflects giving individual students timely and constructive feedback on their assessments which informs their learning and achievement. Table 5.18 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.18 Feedback to individual learners' category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---|--|
| Feedback to individual learners' | <i>"Providing information to students about their learning."</i> (Pre-service teacher 2; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Individual meetings are necessary when feedback is personal or sensitive."</i> (Lecturer 6; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Pre-service teachers are trained that the main purpose of feedback is not to highlight the students' errors, but to help them improve. Lecturer 1 said:

"It is always useful to give learners oral or written feedback having responded to a question. Feedback (positive or negative) should help students progress and improve." (Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

When interviewed, one pre-service teacher referred to the importance of feedback as a tool to show caring for students, saying:

“Feedback can focus on learners’ language or skills, the ideas in their work, their behaviour, their attitude to learning or their progress. Giving feedback does matter because it shows that the teacher comes to the class not only to teach but to care for his students.”

(Pre-service teacher 15; Data source: interview)

In addition, Pre-service teacher 8 said that:

“From my point of view, I see that it is better to give students positive feedback as we should tell learners what is good, what they are doing really well, and what they need to improve, and how to help weaker or less confident students.” (Pre-service teacher 8; Data source: interview)

Pre-service teachers voiced concern about not having many chances to practise how to give feedback to individual learners so that they can create more opportunities for giving feedback and using collected data to improve students’ learning. In this context, Pre-service teacher 4 said:

“What we learnt in the course about giving feedback to individual learners was to some extent theoretical. We did not have much practice giving feedback to individual learners in our microteaching lessons.”

(Pre-service teacher 4; Data source: interview)

Data analysis also showed that Egyptian pre-service teachers were not satisfied with the way this skill was practised in the course and that this prevented them knowing the different purposes of feedback; that when linked to formal or informal assessment such as motivating learners to help them understand their weaknesses and improve them. Feedback can be a powerful device for teachers to use collected data for improving students’ learning. Also, assessment can be of great benefit to pre-service teachers, if used carefully to execute powerful instructional adaptations, shortly after assessment has been done. Research has shown important enhancements to pre-servicers’ learning when teachers clearly explain the goals of each lesson before they teach; collecting evidence on how students learn; use these evidences to guide their students’ learning. But unfortunately, feedback chances in most classrooms according to Bransford, Brown, & Cocking; Carr (2000; 2008) are deficient.

Discussing learners' needs

Analysing the questionnaire item in Table 5.1 confirms that 43% of lecturers and 53% of pre-service teachers considered discussing learners' needs as a focus in the microteaching course. This percentage is consistent with what participants declared in the interview and reflective journals (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The discussing learners' needs category reflects the practice of pre-service teachers of identifying the gap between what the learners want to get out of the learning experience and their current state of knowledge and skills. Table 5.19 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.19 Discussing learners' needs 'category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Discussing learners' needs | <i>"I did not know how to talk about students' needs with their parents or even with the students themselves."</i> (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Discussing learners' needs has a basic role in education. For example, Lecturer 4 said:

"It leads to review and changes teachers' practice. This process links theory to practice and pushes the educational efforts forward."

(Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

In their reflective journal, four pre-service teachers expressed their concern about their training on the microteaching course regarding discussing learners' needs to be mainly theoretical, For example, Pre-service teacher 7 said:

"After the microteaching training, I did not know how to practically discuss students' needs either with the students themselves or with their parents."

(Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: reflective journal)

Despite having "discussing learners' needs" as a focus in the microteaching course, none of the pre-service teachers, whether in the interview or in their reflective journal, were fully satisfied about how they have been trained on this in the course: they believe that even after the course, they are still insufficiently capable

of applying different assessment techniques in their practicum and that they need more practice. Some lecturers tried to artificially add a theoretical part about discussing learners' needs focus in the course, but they did not successfully manage to put this into practice.

Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress

Analysis of the data revealed that collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress was one of the focuses reported by the study participants. Analysis of this questionnaire item in Table 5.1 reveals that 47% of pre-service teachers and 50% of lecturers indicated that collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress is a focus in the microteaching course which is consistent with what they declared in the interview and reflective journals (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The category of collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress reflects using different sources of information to make judgments about students' learning. Table 5.20 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.20Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|---|
| Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress | <i>"The portfolio can help teachers focus on data generated from everyday learning."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Learning journals, portfolios, observations, or group discussion can, as data shows, be used to collect evidence about students' learning. For example, Lecturer 2 said:

"In a school context, a portfolio is a collection of students' work selected by the students themselves to show the students' efforts, progress, and achievements over a period of time. Pre-service teachers don't use it at practicum right now but when they start their jobs at schools."

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

Some pre-service teachers voiced a complaint of their need for more information about the portfolio especially it is newly applied in the Egyptian context. For example, Pre-service teacher 3 said:

“At the course, lecturers only discussed the basic requirements of the portfolio. They said that each student should produce some work to reflect different aspects of achievement during classroom activities. However, we did not know about the portfolios’ content and form. Moreover, are these pieces oral or written and what about the oral language skills (listening, speaking). Also, how can portfolios be used as an assessment tool?”

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Pre-service teacher 9 wrote in her reflective journal some questions that showed her concern about portfolios:

“I hope I could know more about the criteria for assessing portfolios and how it shows the students’ work and participation in classroom activities. What I honestly still need to practise more is the way English is used in their portfolio such as grammatical and vocabulary correctness. Also, how can I help students select by themselves some of their work for their portfolio?”

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: reflective journal)

The above extracts show that pre-service teachers are very keen to use the portfolio as an important tool to promote learner-centred learning and to collect evidence to monitor their students’ progress. They wanted the students to be responsible for their own work and at the same time feel free to make decisions concerning their learning for the purpose of improving their abilities to communicate in English. Data analysis revealed that Egyptian lecturers speak about the importance of the portfolio to document it as a microteaching focus, however, they did not really care about training pre-service teachers on collecting evidence about learners as a method of learning and assessment, because pre-service teachers don’t have enough time at practicum to know their students well enough to gather the information, and they see that pre-service teachers may not use this tool during practicum.

The next section discusses the difficulties of the microteaching course as perceived by Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education.

5.3 The Difficulties of the Microteaching Course

This research question looks into the different difficulties of the microteaching course at Menoufia University, Shebin Elkom faculty of education in Egypt. Difficulties here refer to the problems which Egyptian EFL pre-servicers and their lecturers encounter during the application of the new microteaching course. Questionnaires, semi-structured in-depth interviews and reflective journals were the research instruments used to answer this question.

First, research participants completed the part of the questionnaire which is designed to explore the difficulties of the microteaching course by asking, "How difficult is each of the following to you in the microteaching course?" Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale where 5= extremely difficult; 4= very difficult; 3= somewhat difficult; 2= a little difficult; 1= not difficult at all. For the present study, the extremely difficult, very difficult, and somewhat difficult subscales were added together to equal a total scale score, which was utilised during analysis to express participants' responses and is shown in Table 5.21 below. Elevated scores indicate increased levels of difficulties. Table 5.21 shows the rounded percentages of pre-service teachers' and lecturers' responses to the questionnaire items that are related to their perceptions of the microteaching difficulties:

Table 5.21 The Difficulties of the course from pre-service teachers' perspectives

| Difficulties of the microteaching course | Pre-service teachers' responses | Lecturers' responses |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Peer Group Work | 65% | |
| Finding peers. | 63% | |
| Scheduling group sessions. | 70% | |
| Flexibility among groups (transfer and withdrawal). | 62% | |
| (B) Modelling the skill | 52% | 24% |
| Orienting the trainees in the teaching skills to be practised. | 57% | 43% |
| Presenting the skills using different ways of demonstration. | 47% | 43% |
| (C) Planning a micro-lesson | 47% | 0% |
| Planning lesson objectives. | 45% | 43% |
| Preparing lesson resources. | 50% | 79% |
| (D) Teaching a micro-lesson | 41% | 41% |
| Introducing the lesson in an interesting way. | 46% | 64% |
| Relating the lesson introduction to the main parts of the lesson smoothly. | 40% | 29% |
| Checking comprehension. | 35% | 36% |
| Asking clear questions. | 47% | 50% |
| Pacing the questions and answers adequately. | 45% | 36% |
| Prompting techniques to facilitate answers. | 30% | 29% |
| (E) The critique session | 68% | 89% |
| Looking at the videotape of microteaching. | 63% | 79% |
| Feedback from the lecturer. | 57% | 79% |
| Feedback from peers. | 85% | 100% |
| Create reflection regarding the topics covered. | 67% | 100% |
| (F) The attitude towards teaching | 37% | 32% |
| Encouraging active participation. | 43% | 36% |
| Sharing microteaching experiences with others. | 32% | 29% |

The data presented in Table 5.21 deals with the difficulties encountered in the microteaching course from pre-service teachers' and lecturers' perspectives. There was an agreement among research participants that the critique session was the most difficult part of the course, from 68% of pre-service teachers and 89% of lecturers. The next difficult part in the course was peer group work as seen by pre-service teachers with a percentage of 65%. While teaching a micro-teaching was equally difficult for both of them (41%), there was a discrepancy between research participants in perceiving planning a micro-lesson as a difficulty in the course with 47% of pre-service teachers and 0%, so none of the lecturers. Some reasons behind such a difference were revealed by the qualitative data analysis.

As revealed by qualitative data analysis, three main themes and their sub-themes constructed the difficulties of the microteaching course as perceived by study participants to include: orientation phase difficulties, application phase difficulties and critique phase difficulties. Additionally, six categories emerged from codes that compose the above listed themes. The first theme comprises three categories that are attitudes towards microteaching, peer-group work and modelling the skill. The second theme, the application phase difficulties, involves two categories: teaching a micro-lesson and planning a micro-lesson. The third theme comprised one category, that is the critique session. These are shown in the following Figure 5.5:

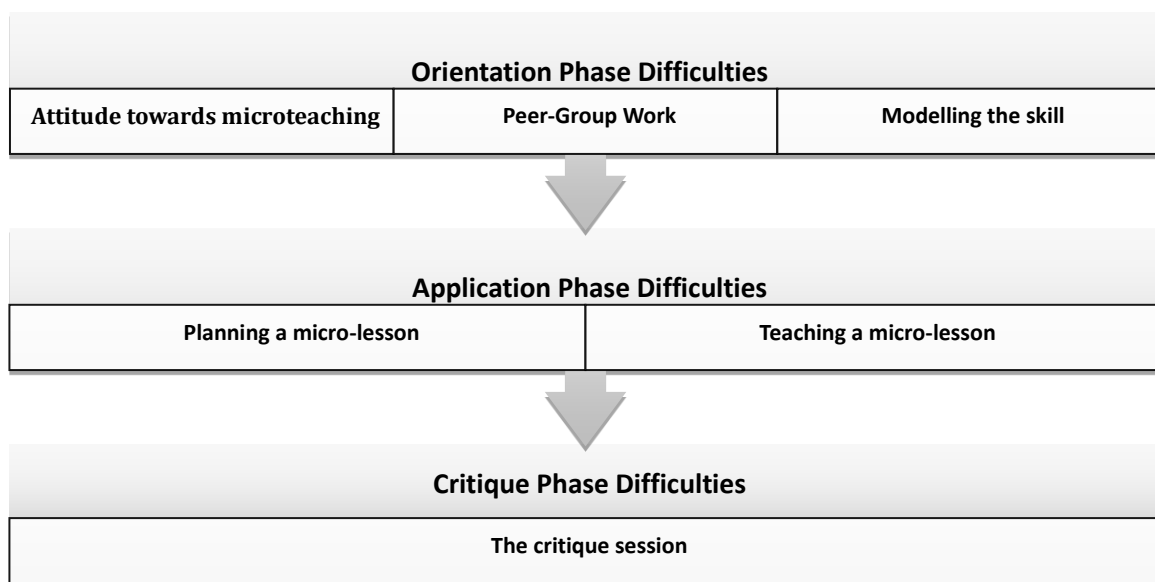


Figure 5.5 The Microteaching difficulties as perceived by study participants

5.3.1 Orientation phase difficulties

The orientation phase emphasises the understanding of the teaching skills that are to be practised by pre-service teachers during the microteaching course by providing knowledge about teaching skills, observing the demonstrations of the teaching skills and discussing them. This theme includes the following categories: attitude towards microteaching, peer-group work, and modelling the skills.

Attitude towards microteaching

Attitude towards teaching is the first difficulty of the orientation phase that research participants encounter in their microteaching course. Data analysis indicated that they encountered some attitudinal difficulties. In line with this, it was confirmed by the questionnaire results that 37% of pre-service teachers and 32% of their lecturers find that attitudes towards microteaching as a new course constitutes a difficulty for them during the sessions. This is consistent with what they revealed in the interviews and reflective journals (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) to indicate how attitudes towards microteaching were a difficulty for them in the microteaching course. The attitudes towards microteaching category reflects that EFL pre-service teachers join their preparation programmes with certain beliefs, values, assumptions and knowledge about the new course teaching that affects their way of interaction with their lecturers and their peers during course activities. Table 5.22 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.22 Attitudes towards microteaching category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|---|
| Attitudes towards microteaching | <i>"I found it helpful to practise teaching before practicum."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: reflective journal) |
| | <i>"I was excited to participate in that new course."</i> (Pre-service teacher 9; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

In their reflective journal, some pre-service teachers expressed their perception about attitudes towards microteaching. For example, Pre-service teacher 3 said:

"Honestly I felt it will be just a theoretical course added to our burden as pre-service teachers, the same as most if not all the courses which we have in the English department. However, I found it really useful to practise teaching before practicum."

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: reflective journal)

The above extract reveals that, although pre-service teachers were anxious about having a new course in their preparation programme, they were very keen to have such a course. Pre-service teachers want to participate in its activities and have an active role within its sessions.

When asked about the way lecturers increase pre-service teachers' interest towards the new course, Lecturer 5 clarified that:

"In almost all the microteaching sessions, I tried to stress the positive features of the microteaching course such as the opportunity to develop teaching skills in a safe environment. I tried also to increase pre-service teachers' interest in the course by using topics that were more relevant and interesting for them in their preparation programmes and in practicum."

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals lecturers' awareness of the role that microteaching, as a professional tool, can play to enhance pre-service teachers' teaching skills. As a result, lecturers play an important role in motivating pre-service teachers to participate in the activities of the new course.

Peer group work

In reference to the microteaching orientation phase's theme difficulties, 65% of pre-service teachers indicated that peer group work is an area of difficulty. This is consistent with what participants in their interviews and reflective journals indicated (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The peer group work category reflects the fact that pre-service teachers accept their role within the group and interact with their peers to fulfil the assigned tasks. Table 5.23 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.23 Peer group work category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------|---|
| Peer group work | <i>"I have some difficulties to teach to my peers as if they are students."</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |

DS: Data Source

Pre-service teachers expressed difficulty concerning their roles of teaching to their peers, by expressing in their reflective journals the ways in which their roles as teachers or peers muddled up during the microteaching course. Their comments are different from Metcalf's (1993) finding, resulting from a questionnaire, that pre-service teachers were really engaged in real microteaching and not just pretending to teach. For example, in my study, Pre-service teacher 1 said:

"In some situations, I felt like an actor in a play, and I was reluctant to criticise my peers. I think it could be easy if we micro-teach with real students." (Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: reflective journal)

Microteaching always includes cognisant options about how to teach the micro-lesson and how to interact with fellow peers in the microteaching course whether during teaching or giving and receiving feedback. Feeling "like an actor in a play," was when trying to act as a real teacher during an activity while she knows well that it is not real teaching. But in spite of being described as artificial, microteaching has a powerful ability to help pre-service teachers freely choose, find and experiment with the type of teacher they are aiming to be. Thus, according to Bell (2007), pre-service teachers can simply discover what they like rather than feel like an actor in a play.

Data analysis of the interviews and reflective journals revealed that peer group work was also a difficulty in the microteaching course because pre-service teachers who perform the role of "students" usually feel that the learning content is boring for them. For example, Pre-service teacher 15 said:

"I sometimes laughed in sessions as the micro-lesson is too easy for me."

(Pre-service teacher 15; Data source: reflective journal)

Some other pre-service teachers voiced their concerns about requiring some kind of training on how to present micro-lessons to their fellow peers. For example, Pre-service teacher 6 said:

"Teaching to peers in the microteaching course was a new situation not only for me but for many pre-service teachers. In Egypt, as you know, we are accustomed to listening to lecturers and not working in groups. Then, suddenly, you came to ask me to teach my peers. It is really difficult."

(Pre-service teacher 6; Data source: interview)

Modelling

Data analysis revealed that modelling constitutes a difficulty in the microteaching course. Questionnaire analysis indicated that 52% of pre-service teachers and 24% of lecturers claimed that modelling was a difficulty for them. This is also consistent with what they revealed in the interview and reflective journal analysis (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 2 lecturers out of 7 in their interview

and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The modelling category reflects the orientation of the teaching skills before practise, and presenting the skills using different ways of demonstration. It involves listening to a verbal description; studying written statements, watching a live demonstration or a recording (sound, film, or video) to illustrate the teaching skills to be mastered. Table 5.24 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.24 The Modelling category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------|---|
| Modelling | <i>"I gave them some written examples of the skills that will be practised in the session."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Pre-service teachers can watch an example of best practice."</i> (Lecturer 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about modelling, most lecturers assured me of giving pre-service teachers verbal descriptions or written examples about the teaching skills to be practised in the session. For example, Lecturer 2 said:

"I used verbal explanation of the skills with pre-service teachers."
(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

Some pre-service teachers criticise only using verbal and written modelling and the need for other forms of skill modelling such as video-modelling to address all pre-service teachers' various learning styles, and of the importance of video-modelling especially for them as EFL pre-service teachers. For example, Pre-service teacher 7 said:

"As a foreign language teacher, I must be capable of using EFL in meaningful and different situations. This can be developed by video-modelling to help me as a pre-service teacher focus on how to teach the lesson by copying it."
(Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Pre-service teacher 13 said:

"I am audio-visual learner that needs to listen and see to have the experience. This is why I found oral and written modelling useless for me."
(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals pre-service teachers' awareness of the importance of video modelling for them to achieve the most benefit from the modelling step.

5.3.2 Application phase difficulties

The application phase is to enable pre-service teachers to practise the teaching skills and it involves planning and preparing a micro-lesson for a skill, and then teaching a micro-lesson to their peers.

Planning a micro-lesson

Planning a micro-lesson was a difficulty for 47% of pre-service teachers. On the contrary, none of the lecturers found it a difficulty. This is consistent with what the analysis of reflective journals and interviews revealed (i.e. 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 2 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The planning a micro-lesson category reflects giving pre-service teachers the chance to plan a lesson including writing instructional objectives and preparing lesson resources with their peers. Table 5.25 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.25The planning a micro-lesson category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Planning a micro-lesson | <i>"I have problems in identifying my objective."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

When asked about why planning a micro-lesson is not a difficulty, Lecturer 2 said:

"I have not found any difficulties related to lesson planning skills as from the course beginning, we tried to focus on training pre-service teachers on different techniques to identify their objectives and use audio-visual aids."

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

This is was inconsistent with what a number of pre-service teachers wrote in their reflective journals commenting that they felt unable to alter lesson planning according to the situation because they are not trained on that. For example, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

"I felt disappointed as I did not know how to change my lesson plan to make a decision, to add an activity or to do some more practices with my students."

(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: reflective journal)

To sum up, planning is the first stage of practising teaching, according to Richards (2000); it is very important to make decisions about any teaching point during the lesson. Also, some pre-service teachers had a tendency to strictly adhere to their lesson plans while some others tended to modify their lesson plans at some points, when necessary, to add activities or more practice.

Teaching a micro-lesson

Data analysis of questionnaires revealed that 41% of pre-service teachers and 41% lecturers experience some difficulties while teaching a micro-lesson. This is consistent with pre-service teachers' responses in the interview and reflective journal which confirmed that participants go through some difficulties (i.e. 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). Teaching a micro-lesson category reflects giving pre-service teachers the chance to teach their prepared micro-lesson to their fellow pre-service teachers who acted as students and tried to help their peers by asking questions and interacting in discussions. Table 5.26 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.26 The Teaching a micro-lesson category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Teaching a micro-lesson | <i>"I performed questioning skills before my peers in the session."</i> (Pre-service teacher 10; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Microteaching as a training technique aims at, as Lecturer 5 said:

"Easing the complexities of the teaching process when pre-service teachers practise teaching tasks such as questioning and classroom management."

(Lecturer 5, DS: interview)

In their reflective journals, some pre-service teachers voiced their concern about not having enough time to teach a whole lesson in the sessions. For example, pre-service teacher 12 commented:

"I think time affected our benefit from the microteaching course as I have not been given enough time to practise teaching."

(Pre-service teacher 12, DS: reflective journal)

However, when asked about how to give pre-service teachers the chance to teach a whole lesson, Lecturer 6 said:

“In the microteaching course, time is limited. In this sense, teaching a whole lesson is not applicable. [But] the course allows them to practise in a safe instructional setting and this experience is beneficial for their future career.”

(Lecturer 6, DS: interview)

The above extracts revealed the role that time played in the way skills were practised in the sessions; and pre-service teachers’ wish to practise teaching whole lessons and not just one skill.

5.3.3 Critique phase difficulties

The critique phase is to enable pre-service experience and use different types of feedback (oral/written) in the microteaching sessions such as self-assessment, peer feedback, and lecturer feedback. Feedback is an important component in the microteaching course as it gives pre-service teachers information about their efforts to improve a particular teaching skill. In this regard, Lecturer 1 said:

“The sources of feedback in the microteaching situation in the present course are: video recording of the micro-lesson; the pre-service teacher himself/herself, then, fellow peers and finally the lecturer.”

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Peer feedback

Data analysis of the research tools as well as pre-service teachers’ responses in the questionnaire revealed that 85% of pre-service teachers and all lecturers experience difficulties during peer feedback. As revealed by data analysis, the lecturers’ percentage is more than that of the pre-servicers as the difficulty is more explicit and clear for them. This is consistent with what participants revealed in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 10 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 7 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The feedback category reflects giving and receiving feedback from peers regarding the skills practised. Table 5.27 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.27 The peer feedback category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Peer feedback category | <i>"I find it difficult to be a student and a feedback giver at the same time."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7, DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

One of the difficulties related to the critique phase is the way pre-service teachers used to give feedback to their peers. Their feedback was general and they started with the negative critique not the positive. For example, Lecturer 4 clarified that since the feedback pre-service teachers provide to other micro-teachers is crucial to their learning to improve their teaching, she drew their attention to some important points to bear in mind during each micro-teacher's presentation. For example, she said:

"I advised my pre-service teachers to be focused and not be too general. Thus, instead of saying to the pre-service teacher that he was not clear in his explanations, we have to tell him exactly where he was not clear and describe why we had trouble understanding him. The best way to give feedback is to identify a small number of things the person did effectively in addition to a few things on which he or she can improve, so, think about what is best to focus on for each pre-service teacher."

(Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

Another problem is the wording used in the feedback by pre-service teachers to their peers. Lecturer 7 said:

"What we want is that the pre-service teacher can benefit from peer feedback. In this respect, they have to be careful with the words they use when giving feedback to their peers. Words such as 'weak', 'poor' can cause breakdown in the communication process inside the microteaching classroom. Even positive words such as 'excellent' and 'very good' need to be used carefully followed by the reasons for giving that feedback."

(Lecturer 7; Data source: interview)

Pre-service teachers want some devices to guide their way when they give and receive feedback. In this respect, Pre-service teacher 1 said:

"I find it so difficult to begin my critique on a blank paper. I was confused from where to start. I believe feedback is useful but it was not perfectly used as we have not been used to such a thing in our education in Egypt."

(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: interview)

The above extract shows pre-service teachers wish to use focussed analysis with checklists for specific skills, with a blank space on the form as suggested by participants in the study which would facilitate giving feedback. Participants wanted some structures of all types of analysis (of self, of peers, by the lecturer), and the type of form mentioned above would be suitable for all functions.

One of the important psychological factors that seems to affect peer feedback is pre-service teachers' fear of failure before their peers. For example, Pre-service teacher 13 said:

"At the beginning of the course, fearing to fail before my peers was annoying me and made me hesitate about the idea of giving feedback or being criticised by my peer. However, I cannot ignore its usefulness to improve my teaching."

(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: reflective journal)

Although many pre-service teachers perceive peer feedback a difficulty for them, the value of peer feedback is not rejected by any group in this study and therefore consideration of this aspect should be included in any future programmes. For example, peer feedback was revealed to be a useful source of raising the pre-service teachers' awareness of inappropriate practice. For example, one pre-service teacher stated:

"My peer group said to me: 'Don't turn your back to us for a long time.' This was a very bad point of mine, so I have been working on this also because I spent much time writing on the board, so my back was turned to the pre-service teachers." (Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

Similarly, peer feedback helped pre-service teachers realise their weaknesses. For example, one participant stated:

"My peers said my voice is very high inside the class and that I have to speak a little lower. I have been working on this for the following sessions and now my voice inside the class is very moderate. At home, when I prepare the lesson, I try to remind myself all the time to speak in a moderate voice."

(Pre-service teacher 5; Data source: interview)

Lecturers tried to give guidance to pre-service teachers to use constructive feedback on areas for future improvement. This is in line with Minton's (1997) views about microteaching as being useful for giving learners the chance to practise teaching on a small scale without fear of failure. Also, lecturers believe

that guiding pre-service teachers to concentrate on the positive points in their performance may help them to be encouraged about their possible progress.

Reflection

Data analysis of the research tools as well as pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire revealed that 67% of pre-service teachers and 100% of lecturers experience difficulties regarding reflection during the sessions. This is consistent with what participants revealed in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 7 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The reflection category refers to pre-service teachers' contribution to the micro-lesson by thinking carefully and expressing their personal opinions about the skill practised in the session. Table 5.28 shows an example of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.28 The reflection category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-------------------|---|
| Reflection | <i>"Each pre-service teacher should think about the micro-lesson that was recorded and replayed."</i> (Lecturer 3, DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Creating reflection regarding the topics covered was another difficulty in the critique phase. Research results indicate that creating reflection regarding the topics discussed in the course was a difficulty for both pre-servicers and lecturers.

For example, Lecturer 5 said:

"After working with their lecturer or with their peers in a microteaching group, pre-service teachers view the videotape of the microteaching lesson for the purpose of giving feedback and think about the lesson as taught."

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

When asked about reflection in the course, Lecturer 2 said:

"In this course, reflection is a process demanding frequent questioning of pre-service teachers' own aims and actions and continuous monitoring of their practice and outcomes in order to make sound decisions and to take action that will develop their skills to help their students learn better."

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

The above extracts reveal lecturers' awareness of their important role that can help pre-service teachers become reflective, and that reflective practice leads to increased pre-service teachers' confidence, and marked instructional growth, all of which have the potential to improve teaching and learning. Time and support are crucial in promoting critically reflective teaching. Interviews with lecturers working in this course indicate another aspect to be reported from analysis of the data collected, and worthy of consideration, which is the issue of pre-service teachers' ability in creating reflection, and also their reluctance to critically analyse their work. However, in their reflective journals, pre-service teachers defend themselves from being reluctant to reflect, stressing the fact that they have not been trained to do so not only at the beginning of the course but also throughout their educational life. For example, Pre-service teacher 15 said:

"Reflection? What is reflection? What do you want me to do? How can I do it? It is the first time to hear such a concept! We need to know how to do this and to be trained on it before the beginning of the course. It is totally new."

(Pre-service teacher 15; Data source: interview)

Another reason for not being motivated to reflect was highlighted by another participant regarding how usable their thoughts will be in future planning and if their voices count. Pre-service teacher 11 said:

"What is next? What is after reflection? I don't think our lecturers will read our ideas and use them. Who cares?"

(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

The preference for the use of reflective journals with some sort of guided and focussed questions from the lecturers which can be helpful in order to direct thinking more closely towards the most crucial aspects of the teaching for that lesson was also highlighted by some pre-service teachers. Pre-service teacher 10 said:

"I found the reflective journal which we used in this study a good idea to express my opinions, especially for me as I prefer to express my ideas in writing not verbally. Also, it helps me to focus my thoughts towards reflection. I wish all of us could use it during the microteaching course."

(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: reflective journal)

Though reflection is one of the most prominent demands for pre-service teachers, some obstacles might face its practice in the Egyptian context. Some of the problems encountered are as follows: when reflection is carried out in a second or a foreign language, linguistic difficulties might be encountered as pre-service teachers would lack the necessary communication needed for this. It was found also that there are many cognitive and meta-cognitive barriers that make looking back and learning from one's own experience very complex and difficult. This is the case especially with pre-servicers who had no prior instances, chances or training to develop or express their thoughts about learning.

Video-taping

Data analysis of the research tools as well as pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire revealed that 63% of pre-service teachers and 79% of lecturers experience some difficulties during videotaping. This is consistent with what participants revealed in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The video-taping category reflects watching a recorded video of a micro-lesson presented by a pre-service teacher to identify points of strength and weakness. Table 5.29 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.29 The video-taping category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------|--|
| Video-taping | <i>"A digital camera was used to videotape the micro-lesson in the current microteaching course because a fixed one was not available."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7, DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

The third difficulty in the critique phase is looking at the videotape of microteaching as revealed by pre-service teachers and lecturers who find looking at the videotape of microteaching difficult for them. When asked about video usage, Lecturer 1 said:

“Having prepared and presented the micro-lesson on the teaching skill concerned, the video was viewed to identify points of strength and areas that need improvement. Then, the pre-service teachers received feedback from peers and from the lecturer.

(Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

When asked about planning for the videotape viewing procedures, Lecturer 4 said that she did not do any planning for viewing videos with pre-service teachers. She commented:

“Honestly, there is no planning for that. It is up to each lecturer and how he manages his sessions. Also, no printed guidelines or checklists were used in microteaching sessions. The pre-service teachers wrote their comments on a blank piece of paper.”

(Lecturer 4; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals that pre-service teachers are uneasy about watching themselves in a video and the need to be encouraged to watch themselves in a positive way as the way in which videos are viewed affects the way videos are interpreted, in other words, is it self-reflection, or in front of peers (Gamoran & Han, 2004). This why Brophy (2004) assures of the importance of careful planning and designing of video tasks to be used for the professional development of pre-service teachers as video helps them to recognise the elements that are worth changing and that guide them to critically understand their own teaching.

When asked about their feeling towards video, pre-service teachers clarified that they felt at ease being video-taped. Some of them preferred to watch the video by themselves, with slightly more females than males saying this, although a significant number, all of them males, preferred to watch it with the lecturer and the peer group, which was also seen as desirable by the lecturers. For example, Pre-service teacher 9 said:

“I prefer to watch my video alone or with my female friends. I feel very shy when males see me in the video.”

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

The need for pre-course training was also voiced by many pre-service teachers, for example, Pre-service teacher 4 said:

"I wish I had been prepared for video watching or video critique before the course began. Maybe two or three sessions to introduce this new technique would help us to understand what will happen in the course. I feel it is real important but not used well. Honestly, I was not prepared whether mentally or emotionally for 'video' in the micro-teaching course."

(Pre-service teacher 4; Data source: reflective journal)

The previous extract reveals that pre-service teachers expressed their need for more training on how to deal with the video equipment and how to act before the video camera because at first the whole microteaching situation is strange for most pre-service teachers and because most of them have not yet seen themselves on a video monitor, so it is necessary for them to be oriented to this situation.

Data analysis shows that pre-service teachers learnt from their teaching things that they were not aware of prior to viewing themselves. Many indicated points to do with their physical habits (gestures, mannerisms, and stance) and their speech (often mentioning how they used words repetitively). Some appeared to gain a view of themselves as a teacher. Pre-service teachers commented that it was really helpful to see themselves teach especially for them as EFL teachers as this helps them review their language usage, gain insights into their classroom performance, and become more self-conscious to their EFL production. For example, Pre-service teacher 12 said:

"Video helped me to see things that I did not notice before while presenting the lesson, such as when I repeat OK, OK after each sentence. I tried to lessen my usage of this word."

(Pre-service teacher 12; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

"Watching the video tape benefitted me a lot to improve my performance; however, I found the feedback given to me by my peers too general and not related to the skills we practice. I think if we had been given forms to fill in, it would be more concentrated."

(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals how pre-service teachers rated the videotaping as effective but requiring more lecturers' guidance to obtain usable feedback.

Lecturer feedback

Data analysis of the research tools as well as pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire revealed that 57% of pre-service teachers and 79% of lecturers experience some difficulties during the critique session. As revealed by data analysis, the lecturers' percentage is more than that of their pre-service teachers as the difficulty is more explicit and clear for them. This is consistent with what participants revealed in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The lecturer feedback category refers to when pre-service teachers receive oral or written feedback from their lecturer concerning the skills practised in the microteaching sessions, to help pre-service teachers improve their teaching performance. Table 5.30 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.30 The lecturer feedback category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------------------|---|
| Lecturer's feedback | <i>"I wish I had received my lecturer's opinion about my performance in the micro-lesson on a piece of paper, not orally, to keep it with me."</i> (Pre-service teacher 8, DS : interview) |

DS=Data Source

Feedback from the lecturers was the fourth difficulty in the critique phase. Pre-service teachers shout in their reflective journals for more lecturers' feedback. For example, Pre-service teacher 3 said:

"The feedback we had from our lecturer was only verbal and I myself did not have any written feedback at all because the session's time is not enough and we were about ten pre-service teachers in the group."

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: reflective journal)

The previous extract revealed that pre-service teachers prefer written feedback. However, this kind of feedback required an adequate number of faculty staff to work with groups and the extract shows that verbal lecturer feedback was preferred by lecturers due to time constraints.

Referring to the microteaching cycle that includes teach, review, reflect, and re-teach (Arends, 2007), the researcher asked both lecturers and pre-service teachers about the re-teaching stage when pre-service teachers re-teach the lesson with the feedback they receive in mind. Lecturer 2 said:

“Unfortunately, we don’t have enough time for every pre-service teacher to re-teach his micro-lesson and we as faculty staff are thinking about this issue for its importance for achieving the aims of the microteaching course.”

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

The above extract reveals that neglecting the re-teach stage in Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education is a result of lack of time and lecturers’ workload. It is important to try to include it in the course as re-teaching ensures that a reasonable level of proficiency is attained. If mastery is demonstrated, the pre-service teacher may be directed to practise and develop yet another skill (Lang, Sood, Anderson, Kettenmann, & Armstrong, 2005; Mugaloglu & Saribas, 2010). Also, re-feedback can help in the process of modifying pre-service teachers’ behaviour in the direction aimed for every skill.

The general purpose of this question was to learn more about the microteaching course including the ways by which pre-service teachers and their lecturers deal with the task. Qualitative evidence revealed by the interviewees revealed the difficulties encountered and how they were perceived by the study participants. To sum up the findings related to the second research question, a number of inconsistencies were found between the different participants of the current study. For example, questionnaire results might have contradicted the interview extracts or vice versa. Consequently, this underscores the importance of using methodological triangulation in which more than one research method is used to reveal the truth and to seek objectivity in the research findings. In the current study, member checking techniques were used such as having two translators, and sending the transcripts back to the participants to double-check them to ensure trustworthy findings.

5.4 Helpfulness of the microteaching course

Research Question (3): How helpful is the microteaching course from Egyptian EFL pre-service teachers' perspectives in enhancing their teaching performance at schools?

This research question looks into the helpfulness of the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom faculty of education in Egypt as perceived by the Egyptian microteaching pre-servicers of English in their practicum. First, descriptive statistics were carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Although this interpretive study is mainly qualitative, descriptive statistical analysis was used to find out the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement among the participants regarding the various issues raised in the questionnaires. Their responses were fed into and integrated with the qualitative analysis to show how helpful is the microteaching course in developing their teaching performance in practicum.

Table 5.31 below shows the rounded percentages of pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire items that are related to their perceptions of the microteaching helpfulness in developing their teaching performance in practicum. Pre-service teachers completed this questionnaire designed to explore how helpful the course was at enhancing their teaching performance at practicum by agreeing or disagreeing on the following statement "The microteaching course helped me develop my skills". Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale: 5= strongly agree; 4= agree; 3= unsure; 2= disagree; 1= strongly disagree. For the present study, the strongly agree and agree subscales were added to equal a total scale score, which was used during analysis to express participants' responses and shown in the table (5.31). Elevated scores indicate increased levels of course helpfulness. These skills were reported as seen in pre-service teachers' questionnaires as shown in the following Table 5.31:

Table 5.31 How helpful was the course from pre-service teachers' perspectives

| The helpfulness of the microteaching course to develop the following skills | Pre-service teachers' responses |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Relationships with learners | 51% |
| teach learners to collaborate with others. | 48% |
| build learners' self-esteem in school. | 61% |
| promote learners' well-being. | 39% |
| seek advice for students' learning difficulties. | 28% |
| Communicating and working with others | 44% |
| communicate in ways that demonstrate respect for others. | 47% |
| negotiate effectively with others. | 45% |
| seek guidance from colleagues. | 38% |
| engage with parents to support students' learning. | 41% |
| communicate with other professionals. | 50% |
| Personal professional development | 54% |
| engage in collaborative teaching. | 51% |
| evaluate feedback. | 57% |
| Teaching and management | 72% |
| enable learners to apply new skills. | 73% |
| support learners to manage aspects of their own learning. | 74% |
| make effective usage of resources available in environment. | 69% |
| set realistic targets for learners. | 75% |
| ensure that all class time is used for learning. | 70% |
| Curriculum and subject matter | 63% |
| have secure ELT pedagogical knowledge. | 65% |
| plan subject-related targets for learners. | 57% |
| answer learners' questions confidently. | 69% |
| clarify learners' misconceptions. | 65% |
| use various language resources e.g. (dictionaries, grammar books), to check English structure, meanings, and usage. | 54% |
| explain the basic functions of language in different situations. | 66% |
| Planning | 66% |
| plan to consider learners' age and abilities. | 70% |
| inform planning with accurate assessments of learners' progress. | 66% |
| plan homework to be completed independently, in a reasonable amount of time. | 63% |
| Assessing and giving feedback | 37% |
| relate assessment to intended learning outcomes. | 33% |
| assess learners against national performance standards. | 30% |
| provide feedback (oral or written) to help learners. | 43% |
| give feedback to individuals, groups or whole class. | 39% |
| support learners to develop self-assessment skills. | 41% |
| Reviewing teaching and learning | 44% |
| help learners to judge their progress towards achieving learning objectives. | 44% |
| modify lesson planning in the light of evaluation and assessment. | 44% |
| have evidence that the modifications you plan lead to changes in practice. | 43% |
| Learning environment | 43% |
| create a meaningful learning environment. | 50% |
| recognise the relationship between learners' behaviour and lesson involvement. | 45% |
| work with colleagues across the school community. | 38% |
| ensure that students know acceptable behaviour and their actions' consequences. | 38% |

The data presented in the table (5.31) deals with the helpfulness of the microteaching course in developing pre-service teachers' teaching performance, from their perspectives. Pre-service teachers see that the course was most helpful in developing their teaching and management skills with a percentage of 72%, then planning skills with a percentage of 66% followed by curriculum and subject matter knowledge with a percentage of 63%. At the end comes assessing and giving feedback with a percentage of 37% to show that the course was least helpful in developing such skills. Some reasons behind these percentages are revealed by the qualitative data analysis.

As revealed by qualitative data analysis, two main themes and their sub-themes were constructed to include personal qualities and professional skills, as shown in the following figure. The participants described them as interrelated and affecting their competence. The first theme comprises of three categories that are: relationship with students, communicating and working with others, and personal professional development. The second theme involves six categories: planning, curriculum and subject matter knowledge, teaching and management, assessing and giving feedback, reviewing teaching, and learning and learning environment as shown in the following Figure 5.6:

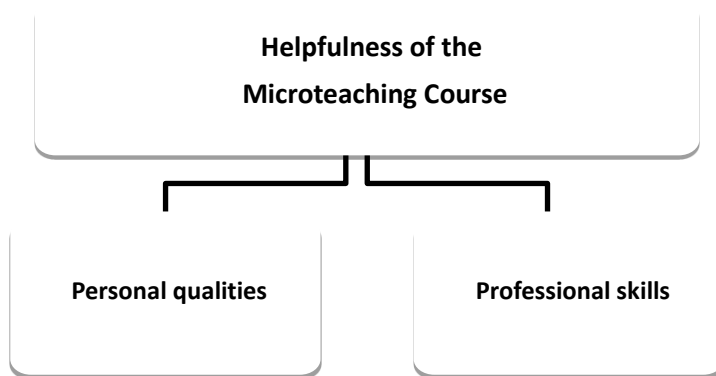


Figure 5.6 Pre-service teachers' perceptions of microteaching helpfulness

5.4.1 Personal qualities

Some personal qualities are prerequisites for teaching; they are ones that help pre-service teachers develop genuine humanistic relationships with their students, colleagues, and parents in addition to creating a democratic atmosphere in the classrooms for their students.

Relationships with students

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 51% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in developing their relationships with students at practicum. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interviews and reflective journals (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The relationships with students category reflects helping pre-service teachers to collaborate, build students' confidence and self-esteem in school, identify learners with learning difficulties and seek advice for them. Table 5.32 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.32 Relationships with students' category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Relationships with students | <i>"I make fun, to build a trust relationship with my students."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"This made me more knowledgeable and close to them."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Being aware about the need for this quality to alleviate stress in class and motivate students to learn, one pre-service teacher pointed out how he made use of humour in class. His justification for doing so was twofold: to make the students enjoy and learn, and reinforce students' learning. He stated:

"I use jokes related to the lesson itself, a situation that arises from the lesson itself, but not from outside the subject to be learned - someone pronounced a word wrongly, someone pronounced a word in a funny way inside the class, to make a good situation, or fun, just for five or six seconds in the class to build a trust relationship with my students."

(Pre-service teacher 5; Data source: interview)

Another pre-service teacher said that the microteaching course helped him to put in mind the different learning styles of the students that help build students' self-esteem. For example, she commented that:

"Microteaching helped me to care for students' different learning styles when designing aids as every student is different from the others. Some students might learn best through visual stimuli while others might learn best by listening. A third group of students learn best by drawing a picture or doing an action, and this made me more knowledgeable and close to them."

(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: reflective journal)

Another participant revealed the effectiveness of the microteaching course in helping them to increase students' self-esteem. For example, Pre-service teacher 11 wrote in his reflective journal:

“Egyptian students lack the motivation to participate actively in classroom activities because of their concern of passing the examinations to get a high mark. Focus is on memorisation rather than enjoying learning. During the microteaching course I knew some practical techniques about how to make learning fun. I know it is a big difficulty in Egypt but it is worth trying.”
(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

While half of the pre-service teachers declared that the microteaching was helpful for them in building relationships with students in the school, the other half do not agree. For example, Pre-service teacher 9 stated:

“I did not find the microteaching course useful for me. The mental health course helped me much more to know how to deal with my students inside the classroom psychologically, and I began to understand their psychological problems and needs more clearly than before. This provided me with deeper awareness of the students' emotional needs in a way that was reflected positively on treating them.”
(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

Communicating and working with others

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 44% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in helping them communicate and work with others at practicum. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The communicating and working with others category reflects helping pre-service teachers to constantly seek advice and information from colleagues, communicate and engage with parents to support learning, and teaching to raise students' attainment levels. Table 5.33 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.33 Communicating and working with others category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|--|
| Communicating and working with others | <i>“It did not help me to closely work with my students' parents.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 12; DS: interview) |
| | <i>“I consult my school supervisor. The teachers there offered to provide advice with language issues if required.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Communicating effectively with colleagues and other professionals was highlighted because of its relevance to the nature of the work of the teacher who needs to update his knowledge and cope with change. For example, Pre-service teacher 3 stated:

“Information is developing, and for us, it is changeable. What is taught today is not taught in the future. If I do not update myself and work as a team with my colleagues, I will not be able to teach well. Also, I must be aware of what is going around me and to help me know what it is.”

(Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview)

To seek guidance from colleagues and other professional is important for developing proficiency in TEFL. For instance, one participant stated:

“When I face any difficulty in language at practicum, no one from the Faculty of Education is near to help or offer advice in the school.”

(Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview)

Personal professional development

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 54% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in developing their personal professional development. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interviews and reflective journals (i.e. 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The personal professional development category reflects involvement in collaborative planning, evaluating advice and feedback, and staying up-to-date with educational and critical thinking to enhance students’ achievement. Table 5.34 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.34 Personal professional development category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|---|
| Personal professional development | “Microteaching helped them to benefit from feedback given by my supervisor at practicum.” (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Pre-service teachers agreed with the idea that microteaching helped them to discover the importance of feedback they can receive from their peers and that a teacher could know about the success of the lesson by asking peers or supervisors at the end. One benefit of doing this as revealed by one of the participants was to

help the teacher make an informed decision with regard to modifying his practice.

Pre-service teacher 7 said:

"I asked my peers to watch my lesson during practicum with the supervisor because the class teacher did not attend with me. After the lessons, I get their feedback about my method of teaching, what I need to change, what they like and what they do not like, so I can change it next time."

(Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: interview)

Feedback from supervisors was referred to by another participant in his reflective journal, but with a tone of caution stemming from the position of power inherent in the supervisor/pre-service teacher relationship. This was pointed out by Pre-service teacher 6:

"With my supervisors, whatever their advice for me, I discuss their advice. If they try to convince me but if I am not convinced, I try to discuss it with them politely. The problem is the supervisors' opinions are in many situations different from our lecturers' one. For example, we learnt in the microteaching course lesson planning steps and when we used them in practicum, the supervisors asked us to change it saying that we have to use the teachers' guide steps."

(Pre-service teacher 6; Data source: reflective journal)

Another pre-service teacher revealed how the microteaching course was helpful in enhancing their professional development. Pre-service teacher 3 said:

"It was the first time to work in groups and know the importance of feedback. Peer feedback is highly important as we are teaching English as a foreign language, and if I am a good teacher, I have to listen to other colleagues' points of view for my professional development."

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

Engaging in collaborative teaching as a path for personal professional development was mentioned by Pre-service teacher 1 who revealed its difficulty in Egypt, saying:

"I know collaborative teaching is important for teacher development but what I really need to know is how to collaboratively teach with my colleague. Unfortunately, I feel that microteaching was not helpful enough in this regard. Also, I did not experience any team teaching in Egypt before."

(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: interview)

5.4.2 Professional skills

The professional skills theme is the second sub-theme of the microteaching helpfulness. It refers to the competencies that are prerequisites for teaching as they support teachers to have a positive attitude toward knowledge, to have skilfulness and be knowledgeable of subject matter, pedagogy, learning and human development, and use their knowledge to guide their teaching practices in the classroom, stimulate their students' motivation, and enhance their achievement. It constitutes five categories: Planning, curriculum and subject matter, teaching and management, assessing and giving feedback, and reviewing teaching and learning.

Planning

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 66% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course helpful in developing their planning skills at practicum. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 7 pre-service teachers out of 10 in their reflective journal). The planning skills category reflects helping pre-service teachers in the process of achieving goals by providing them with awareness of teaching objectives and structure of content, the suitable places of reinforcement and controlling their students' behaviour during teaching, and assessing learners' progress. Table 5.35 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.35The planning skills category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------|--|
| Planning Skills | <i>"The course helped me to modify my objectives if sudden issues appeared during the lesson."</i> (Pre-service teacher 15; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Data analysis revealed that the microteaching course was helpful in developing pre-service teachers' abilities to inform their planning with accurate assessment. For example, Pre-service teacher 13 said:

"I learnt how to plan a lesson, the content of the syllabus through training on writing instructional objectives, and designing lesson resources bearing in mind my students' levels."

(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: interview)

In the same vein, Pre-service teacher 1 said:

“As for the content, some lessons are a little bit difficult for the students. The course helped me to prepare activities to help my students at practicum.”(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: interview)

Curriculum and subject matter knowledge

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 63% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in helping them with their curriculum and subject matter at practicum. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and the reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The curriculum and subject matter knowledge category reflects helping pre-service teachers to have secure pedagogical knowledge and understanding of ELT, and explaining language functions in different contexts. Table 5.36 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.36The Curriculum and subject matter knowledge category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|---|
| The Curriculum and subject matter knowledge | <i>“The microteaching course helped me to know the latest trends in teaching language.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>“The course was good in focusing on using different materials to warm students up.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Knowledge of subject matter was seen as an essential part of the EFL teacher knowledge. Without proficiency in the target language, the teacher could not help students learn and use it. This was pointed out by a participant who stated:

“The microteaching course helped me to teach language grammar and vocabulary but not oral skills. This will easily help me quickly address the students’ needs and at the same time, I will be able to identify areas of weaknesses in their learning. Being competent in English will enable me to teach language skills appropriately.”
(Pre-service teacher 5; Data source: interview)

Another participant finds the microteaching course not useful. Pre-service teacher 10 said:

“Particular courses, during the university study in the language department, namely the novel and prose, grammar and linguistics, gave me the chance to read more, to comment, and to read about poetry, about great writers, great novels, great novelists, and this helped me more with my oral skills and the culture of language itself.”

(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: interview)

These courses were seen favourably as a source of proficiency in the target language because of their direct impact on the teacher’s work. For example, one participant stated:

“Studying the course of linguistics affected me so much in pronouncing the words right.” (Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: interview)

Another pre-service teacher finds microteaching helpful for her to strike a balance between finishing the curriculum material and responding to the pre-service teachers’ needs by providing additional material acknowledging both pursuits. She stated:

“I found during the course, that if students cannot read, and I am teaching them a reading passage, I couldn’t continue until I teach them how to read, so I do it half and half. I teach the students how to read and I start carrying on with my goal, so I don’t leave their needs out. Sometimes, I get the focus of the lesson in about ten minutes, and then the rest of the forty five minutes highlighting the weakness that they have and how to tackle it.”

(Pre-service teacher 12; Data source: interview)

One participant’s reason for the use of such activities was to assist students to easily digest the curriculum material. He stated:

“The course was good in focusing on using different materials to warm up students and prepare them for the task, and maybe to prepare them for other activities in the book later on.”

(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

Teaching and management

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 72% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in developing their teaching and management. This percentage is inconsistent with what they clarified in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The teaching and management category reflects making effective use of the materials and equipment available in class and the environment, accomplishing the objectives of the lesson within the time allotted and ensuring that all class time is

used for learning. Table 5.37 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.37 The teaching and management category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------------------|--|
| The teaching and management | <i>"Microteaching helped me with my time management but not my classroom management as when it came with real students, it was really different."</i> (Pre-service teacher 12, DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

The microteaching course was particularly useful in the time management of the lessons and the amount of content. For example, Pre-service teacher 10 stated:

"The course helped me manage my time with careful planning. If I do not plan my lesson well, I will lose the time by doing nothing."

(Pre-service teacher 10; Data source: interview)

When the pre-servicers started their practicum, they were badly in need of support. This is why the course was helpful for supporting pre-service teachers during practicum. For example, Pre-service teacher 2 said:

"I found the course helpful to practise teaching before starting my practicum."

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: interview)

Assessing and giving feedback

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 37% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in helping them with their assessing and giving feedback at practicum. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and the reflective journal (i.e. 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The assessing and giving feedback category reflects relating assessment, whether it is formative or summative, to intended learning outcomes, and supporting learners to develop self-assessment skills to improve teaching and learning. Table 5.38 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.38 The assessing and giving feedback category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Assessing and giving feedback | "What I only used for students' assessment is homework." (Pre-service teacher 5, DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

The microteaching course was not helpful in developing pre-service teachers' assessment, as assessment is only related to giving students homework at the end of the lesson. This was given by one participant who stated:

"Homework helps students integrate ideas together and find connections in what they have been taught. However, it is not everything in the assessment process. I really want to help my students to judge their progress towards meeting their learning objectives."

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

Reviewing teaching and learning

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 44% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in developing their reviewing of teaching and learning skills. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The reviewing teaching and learning category reflects helping pre-service teachers review their teaching approaches and effectiveness on learners' progress in light of formal evidence such as school targets, learners' progress towards meeting the goals, and making changes where necessary. Table 5.39 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.39 The Reviewing Teaching and Learning category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|---|
| Reviewing Teaching and Learning | <i>"The course was not helpful for me to revise my own teaching practices in the classroom."</i> (Pre-service teacher 10; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Data analysis shows that the course was not helpful for pre-service teachers to develop their reflective and self-evaluation skills. Constant self-questioning could facilitate teachers' growth. Without self-evaluation, teachers could find it difficult to review teaching effectiveness. Reflection as a tool for reviewing teaching and

learning was highlighted by study participants for teachers to recognise if teaching went well or not. For example, Pre-service teacher 3 said:

“Reflection is seen as an important tool to facilitate teacher growth as it could have an impact on practice by giving the teacher an aid to reflect in action. [But] the course did not help us to use any reflective tools during the microteaching sessions and even lecturers did not try to help us know how to reflect.”

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

As revealed by data analysis, the need for self-evaluation was considered important to know one’s weaknesses and strengths and to develop and consequently boost the learning of the pre-servicers. Reflection on teaching could also work as a tool for change because of the constant questioning of the self and the desire to be better.

Learning environment

In relation to analysing the questionnaire items, results confirm that 43% of pre-service teachers find the microteaching course effective in helping them with their learning environment at practicum especially with creating a purposeful learning environment regarding working with colleagues in the wider school context. This percentage is consistent with what they clarified in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 3 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, and 4 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal). The learning environment category reflects helping pre-service teachers to work across the school with colleagues for building an interactive learning climate. Table 5.40 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.40The Learning environment category codes

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Learning environment | <i>“The course neglected guiding us on this issue.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The microteaching course was not helpful in developing pre-service teachers’ ability to work within their wider community. For example, Pre-service teacher 2 said:

“We have been trained in isolation from our wider community. The reality is still that the aims of education are mainly to transmit knowledge and to prepare us for exams, not to have an effective role with our local authority and school staff, students, parents, other stakeholders.”

(Pre-service teacher 2; Data source: reflective journal)

To sum up, at the end of this section, as revealed by data analysis, the microteaching course has been proved to be an important technique for developing pre-service teachers’ teaching skills (Metcalf, 1993). During the sessions the pre-service teachers had the chance to practise teaching skills such as set induction, questioning, using aids and lesson closure. However, there are some other skills that need to be practised more such as management skills, dealing with students’ inappropriate behaviour, using reflective journals and collecting evidence to monitor learners’ progress. This was proven by pre-service teachers’ comments in their reflective journal with statements such as “it is a good learning experience”, and “the course helped me plan for my practicum”. These statements show that practising teaching in a safe environment was significant to the pre-service teachers. These statements are also approved by their lecturers who clarified in the interview that their pre-service teachers’ teaching skills improved after the microteaching sessions.

5.5 Themes of intervening factors

This refers to the contextual and other factors that affect the application of the microteaching course in the Egyptian context. Four main themes have emerged from data analysis: the informational theme, psychological theme, situational theme and institutional theme. Additionally, thirteen categories emerged from codes that construct these themes. These themes, subthemes and categories are shown in the following Figure 5.7:

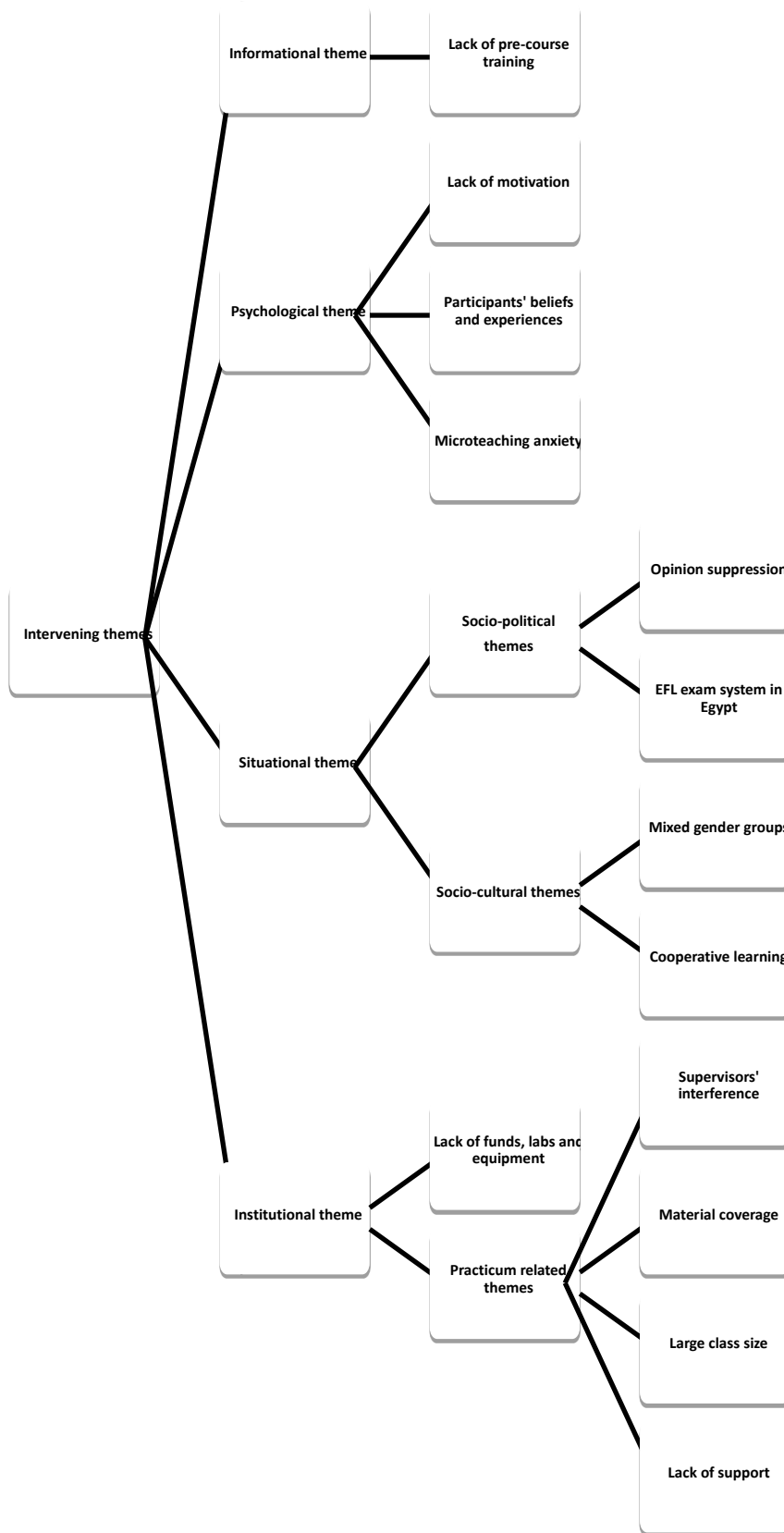


Figure 5.7 Emergent themes and categories

5.5.1 Informational theme

The Informational theme refers to pre-service teachers' knowledge about the course. It involves one category which is the lack of pre-course training category.

Lack of pre-course information

Analysis of the data revealed that a lack of pre-course information or training was one of the factors that affected course application as reported by study participants. Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 7 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how a lack of pre-course information affected the study participants' involvement with the course. The lack of pre-course information category reflects pre-service teachers' need to be counselled about the aims of the course, its value for them, its main components, and their roles during the sessions. Also, the lecturers need to assess their pre-service teachers' previous knowledge and plan and design the course activities accordingly. Table 5.41 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.41 Lack of pre-course information category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Lack of pre-course training | <i>"Sufficient information had to be provided to us before the start of the course."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: reflective journal) |
| | <i>"I was not quite sure of how to give feedback to my pre-service teachers."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Analysis of pre-service teachers' interviews and reflective journals indicated that sufficient information about the course was necessary for a clear understanding of course skills, activities and components and that the difficulties they faced in the course are not necessarily the result of a weakness in their intellectual abilities, but it might be due to the lack of the necessary information needed before the course begins. A sample example of this view is from Pre-service teacher 3 as follows:

"I thought that as a new course, some more information about microteaching was important to facilitate its application."
(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: reflective journal)

5.5.2 Psychological theme

The Psychological theme reflects categories related to pre-service teachers' mind or emotions. Three categories construct this theme: lack of motivation, microteaching anxiety, and participants' beliefs and experiences.

Lack of motivation

Analysis of the data revealed that lack of motivation was one of the factors that affected course application. Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 5 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how a lack of motivation affects the study participants' involvement with the course. The motivation category reflects stimulating a desire in pre-service teachers to be continually interested in and committed to course activities, and to exert persistent effort in attaining their goal. Table 5.42 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.42 Lack of motivation category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------------|---|
| Lack of motivation | <i>"Working in an unprepared environment negatively affected my motivation to participate in the course."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"Pre-service teachers' low proficiency levels de-motivate them."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

In relation to motivation, data revealed that pre-service teachers were not motivated to practice microteaching. This view was well-expressed by pre-servicers in their interviews and in their responses to the reflective journals and the questionnaire open-ended questions. For example, Pre-service teacher 5 said:

"Working in an unprepared environment reduces our motivation to participate, or exchange ideas with peers. I personally feel reluctant to take part in the session or in group work or feedback because of the poor microteaching settings prepared. I wish I had been at home sleeping at this moment rather than doing something I feel is a waste of time that brings my learning motivation down."

(Pre-service teacher 5; Data source: questionnaire open-ended questions)

In the same context, microteaching lecturers feel that pre-servicers are not motivated to participate as a result of their language proficiency level. This view is represented in what Lecturer 2 said about her pre-servicers as follows:

“To be honest, pre-service teachers’ low proficiency levels de-motivate them. They need a strong psychological push to be able to work in any course, not necessarily microteaching. Pre-servicers in session are marked by laziness, fear and hesitation. All these characteristics make them de-motivated”.

(Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

Lack of confidence on the other hand made pre-service teachers seem as if they were unaware of what they were doing in session and separated them from their peers. For example, Pre-service teacher 9 said:

“When I face a new situation or a choice, lack of confidence makes me seem hesitant and lose my line of thought when facing my peers. I think it is not only my case and it can be removed by support and help from lecturers and peers.”

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: reflective journal)

Another respondent wrote:

“I’m not confident enough to start a discussion without my peers. This is why I’m unconfident about my microteaching skills.”

(Pre-service teacher 7; Data source: reflective journal)

In the same context, two lecturers referred to their pre-servicers’ lack of self-confidence. For example, Lecturer 6 said:

“Egyptian pre-servicers lack self-confidence. They think English is a troubling language. They lack the correct way of dealing with it efficiently. They lack self-confidence concerning the English language. They have a fear of errors.”

(Lecturer 6; Data source: interview)

The pre-service teachers’ low ability in English could also have an impact on their active participation in the course as it is an obstacle to effective communication with peers, having to resort to the mother tongue due to weakness in the foreign language. This is in spite of the need of confidence in English in order to achieve the aims of EFL teaching in the context of the current study. Another reason for lack of self-confidence is the conflict between pre-service teachers’ expectations of the course and their actual needs. This mismatch between their actual expectations and needs may lead to unwillingness to participate in the course. For example, Pre-service teacher 15 said:

“The first time I looked into the timetable and found a new course called microteaching, I expected it would be a 100% practical course to support our needs for more practice. But unfortunately, the truth was not like what I expected. It was 50% practice and 50% theory.”

(Pre-service teacher 15; Data source: interview)

Microteaching anxiety

Microteaching anxiety is represented as another psychological intervening factor that affects course application. Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 10 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 11 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how microteaching anxiety affects their involvement with the course. The microteaching anxiety category reflects pre-service teachers’ being in a psychological state of concern, nervousness or worry. Table 5.43 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.43 Microteaching anxiety category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|------------------------------|---|
| Microteaching anxiety | <i>“I feel stressed as I don’t know how to use video or give feedback.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Data analysis of the interviews and reflective journals demonstrated that pre-service teachers at the beginning of the course feel anxious while microteaching and that they might feel concerned or under pressure. Pre-service teacher 5 showed how stressed he felt when he started microteaching:

“When I started microteaching, I was afraid that the lecturer might make fun of my teaching performance in front of my peers.”

(Pre-service teacher 5; Data source: reflective journal)

Although anxiety could have a negative impact on the process of teaching and learning in the course (Child, 1997; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003; Peker, 2009), pre-service teachers assured me of its educational benefits for them by statements like: “I found it useful,” or “frightened at the beginning but good”. This supports Minardi’s (1999) study’s results about video usage in the microteaching course and that although it was an anxiety provoking activity, it is still an important learning experience.

Participants' Beliefs and Experiences

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how beliefs and experiences affect their involvement with the course. This category reflects pre-service teachers and lecturers having assumptions and convictions that are held to be true and affect their learning and teaching at university. Table 5.44 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.44 Participants' beliefs and experiences category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--|--|
| Participants' beliefs and experiences | <i>"I also think that this is the effect of the secondary school experiences that forced me to memorise and close my mind."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

In reference to beliefs and experiences, a number of issues were revealed including rote learning, lack of critical thinking, competitive learning environment, and an exam-oriented environment at pre-university schools that lead to pre-service teachers' inability to criticise themselves or to give feedback to their peers or even to self-reflect. At pre-university stage, teachers encouraged us to memorise in our learning. An example of what pre-servicers expressed was given by Pre-service teacher 3 who said:

"I was unable to focus on definite things while microteaching and reflecting on my teaching because I don't have the critical eye that makes me aware of my mistakes. This is the effect of the pre-university experiences that forced me to memorise and close my mind."

(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: reflective journal)

In addition, Lecturer 1 added that lecturers themselves are not open to discussing ideas in the planning stage or accepting pre-service teachers' feedback on their way of teaching. This is could be due to the way they consider themselves as a power source that cannot be criticised. In this regard, she said:

"The Egyptians, the society and the culture in which we live don't give a chance to discuss ideas, express opinions and to argue for or against certain opinions." (Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Furthermore, Lecturer 7 highlighted that the exam-oriented educational system in the pre-university stages negatively impacted pre-servicers' thinking skills:

"All learners in Egypt are taught for the exam. They are not taught to think. They tend to memorise pieces of English. They target certain issues and topics that they expect to come in the exam. Lecturers in most cases also encourage this." (Lecturer 6; Data source: interview)

Findings of the current study indicated that reflection in EFL is undervalued at the pre-university stages in Egypt. This is emphasised by Lecturer 3 who gave the following quote to advocate her view:

"At the pre-university level, no time for reflection is given for students..... I don't think this situation is suitable for reflection..... Teachers don't care about reflection; they care about giving private teaching sessions outside the school for extra money to cover their living expenses."
(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

5.5.3 Situational theme

This is comprised of two sub themes: socio-political and socio-cultural sub-themes. The first sub-theme refers to the political policy that affected Egyptian society and its members while the second one refers to factors related to the set of beliefs, customs, practices and behaviours that exist within the Egyptian population.

Opinion suppression and the Egyptian revolution

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 13 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 5 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 14 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how opinion suppression affects their involvement with the course. The opinion suppression category reflects pre-service teachers' inability to express their opinions and ideas freely for fear of lecturers' authority or society's unjust use of power. Table 5.45 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.45Opinion suppression category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------------------|---|
| Opinion suppression | <i>"I cannot express my point of view freely so I cannot reflect for fear of the lecturer."</i> (Pre-service teacher 7, DS : reflective journal) |
| | <i>"Our minds have been automated to obey what the teacher says as we were sacred."</i> (Pre-service teacher 9, DS: questionnaire open ended questions) |
| | <i>We blindly follow what the teacher says because we know that he is the only experienced person in this course."</i> (Pre-service teacher 5, DS : interview) |

DS=Data Source

Data analysis of the interviews and reflective journal clarified that pre-service teachers cannot express their opinions freely within the Egyptian university educational system. For example, Pre-service teacher 11 highlighted how he is unable to express his view:

"I cannot negotiate my point of view freely for fear of the lecturer; he will not let me pass the examination."
(Pre-service teacher 11; Data source: reflective journal)

Likewise, Pre-service teacher 1 said:

"Expressing my view in an honest way is a very big difficulty for me. Our opinions are suppressed and we have to obey, or otherwise the lecturer would give me a very bad mark that will fail me in this course."
(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: reflective journal)

In the same vein, Pre-service teacher 15 pinpointed how he is politically unable to express his opinion: *"We are in Egypt. So, we are used to write what is consistent with the policy of the teacher, the university and the whole country. Politically speaking, we are used to being passive and not active participants."*

(Pre-service teacher 15; Data source: reflective journal)

Similarly, lecturers advocated that pre-servicers are culturally bound not to express their opinions. Lecturer 2:

"They are not confident enough to express their opinions. I think that our society and secondary educational system is opinion suppressing. I try sometimes to direct their attention to assume that there are other readers to convince them. But, they can never forget that they are pre-servicers microteaching for a teacher." (Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

As revealed by data analysis, I can argue here that this is the current situation in Egypt as I have to persuade pre-service teachers to freely reflect and convince them to write their opinion and that the lecturer will not see their reflective journal. Data analysis also showed how the cultural view of the teacher as the source of knowledge and power negatively affected pre-servicers' ability to innovate and express their interests freely. These two reasons, opinion suppression and unfair power relationships, were among many other reasons that initiated the Egyptian revolution.

The 2011 Egyptian revolution began on Tuesday, 25th January, 2011 when millions of Egyptian protesters went outside on the street calling for equity, liberty and social justice. Egyptian people wanted to get rid of the regime of the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, together with its state of police brutality, emergency laws, fierce corruption, and severe economic problems such as unemployment, food shortages, poor health care, and low wages that make a quarter of the population live below the poverty line.

The EFL exam system in Egypt

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 7 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how the EFL exam system affects the application of the course in the Egyptian context. The EFL exam system category reflects the Egyptian scheme of evaluating pre-service teachers' English language skills or knowledge. Table 5.46 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.46 The EFL Exam system category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|----------------------------|--|
| The EFL Exam system | <i>"The examination is based on reading and writing and the examiners ignore listening and speaking."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The EFL examination policy interfered with the teachers' attempts at learner-centred education and communicative practice. For example, although almost all participants highlighted the need for focusing on teaching EFL aural-oral skills as well as reading and writing, the reality of EFL teaching was found to be not a straightforward representation of the claims espoused, which were played down by the EFL examination system. The exam system resulted in an unbalanced focus on teaching the EFL skills, marginalising listening. For example, a participant stated:

"No tests are done in listening, so none of us care about listening. When I gave pre-service teachers listening texts, I noticed that some of them didn't care, and when I asked them, they said that they were not going to be tested on it at the end of the year."

(Pre-service teacher 12; Data source: interview)

On the other hand, teaching writing was seen as important because of being examined. For instance, Pre-service teacher 9 said:

"Writing is very important because all testing is done in writing. Tests are set to deal with writing and reading only."

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

Mixed gender groups

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how mixed gender groups affect their involvement with the course. The mixed gender group reflects female pre-service teachers working with their male peers in the same group or with different groups. Table 5.47 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.47 Mixed gender groups category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------|---|
| Mixed gender groups | <i>"I hate the idea that recorded videos will be watched by male pre-service teachers in the group."</i> (Pre-service teacher 11; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The relationship between males and females is a sensitive one in the Egyptian context. Most pre-service teachers receive their pre-university education in single-gender schools and working with each other in the same group in university is somehow sensitive especially for female pre-service teachers. For example, Pre-service teacher 4 said:

"I feel uncomfortable having males in our group".
(Pre-service teacher 4; Data source: interview)

In the same context, Lecturer 7 stated that:

"Fitting peers into groups was problematic as pre-service teachers tend to work with their gender and most of the groups are only males or females."
(Lecturer 7; Data source: interview)

Cooperative learning

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how cooperative learning affects their involvement with the course. Cooperative learning reflects pre-service teachers working together in small groups to finish the microteaching assigned tasks. Table 5.48 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.48 Cooperative learning category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Cooperative learning | <i>"My parents told me never to give my work to anybody because they might benefit from my work and get higher marks than me."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: reflective journal) |
| | <i>"Pre-service teachers are reluctant to work in groups when the chance permits and if they do group work, they don't want to share ideas or comments with each other."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>"This is the influence of the family and school environment which taught them to hide knowledge and progress away from their colleagues."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

The Egyptian learning environment was viewed as competitive by both lecturers and pre-servicers. This competitive learning environment is regarded as one of the outcomes of the socio-cultural difficulties affecting pre-servicers' microteaching in English. Data analysis of the interview and reflective journal highlighted this issue. For example, Pre-service teacher 9 said:

“When we were working together as a group, no one would like to share his ideas for fear of them being stolen by the group.”
(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

In reference to the culture of not sharing knowledge and skills, Pre-service teacher 14 said:

“I have a friend of mine whom I asked to see his lesson plan and he made many excuses not to give it me.”
(Pre-service teacher 14; Data source: interview)

In the same context, lecturers pinpointed the competitiveness of pre-servicers' learning at the university level. For example, Lecturer 3 stressed pre-servicers' unwillingness to co-operate or work in groups:

“Pre-servicers feel jealous of each other and this hinders any attempt for peer review. They don't want to show each other their microteaching lesson plans or activities”.
(Lecturer 3; Data source: interview)

Moreover, Lecturer 7 added that pre-servicers do not want to share or exchange ideas of their topics:

“When I asked them to surf the internet about certain topics just to increase their prior knowledge about the topic, I found out that they hide the articles that they downloaded from the internet from each other for fear of their ideas being copied.” (Lecturer 7; Data source: interview)

As revealed by data analysis, peer group work is affected by the competitive learning atmosphere in the Egyptian context.

5.5.4 Institutional theme

This is related to the rules formulated by, or managed by, institutions; whether the faculty of education or the schools where pre-service teachers start their practicum.

Lack of funds, labs and equipment

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 11 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 3 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 10 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how lack of funds, labs and equipment affect their involvement with the course. This lack reflects pre-service teachers' lack of the economic or

productive factors required to execute their microteaching tasks and achieve the desired outcome. Three most basic resources are funds, labs, and equipment. Table 5.49 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.49Lack of funds, labs and equipment category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Lack of funds, labs and equipment | <i>“Sometimes if the lab is used by another group, we use the theatre hall to do our microteaching sessions; I cannot have access to the whole group for face to face interaction.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 5; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Institutional sustainment is important to pre-service teachers’ professional development. Thus, educational institutions should invest more to build labs and keep up to date with equipment. Another factor related to resources is classroom seats. Classroom seating arrangements in rows facing the teacher in the Egyptian context could hinder the organisation of collaborative learning which could support pre-service teachers to learn actively and from one another. Although organising collaborative learning is one of the main components of the course to assist pre-service teachers to learn actively, classroom seating arrangement in rows was seen by the majority of participants as a difficulty to working in groups. Even when group interaction was organised, it was done in an uncomfortable manner for the pre-servicers as revealed by interview and reflective journal data analysis. For example, Lecturer 2 stated:

“When they are doing any kind of group work, I cannot just mingle around because of the seating problem.” (Lecturer 2; Data source: interview)

The availability of visual and audio resources was seen as influencing the pre-service teachers on the course. Also, a database is not available for the pre-service teachers. For example, Lecturer 1 said:

“There are only one two video cameras in the Faculty that are appropriately working. This causes problems because sometimes people may want to use them at the same time. As a result, I had to skip or postpone the video recording.” (Lecturer 1; Data source: interview)

Lack of resources had an adverse effect on putting knowledge of the curriculum in action. Although there was a multimedia lab EFL teachers could make use of, it could not be used by all teachers at the same time, so the school organised the

number of times a teacher could use the lab for teaching, which was seen as not enough. For example, a participant stated:

“The lab is only one period every two weeks. This is too few”.

(Lecturer 5; Data source: interview)

In the same context, pre-service teacher 13 stated:

“There are not enough books. I need to go out to an internet café shop.”

(Pre-service teacher 13; Data source: reflective journal)

Data analysis revealed that although lecturers might be keen to prepare their pre-servicers for life and that having modern technology in class could make a difference while teaching, the lack of facilities had a negative effect on making such improvements.

Lack of support in practicum

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 8 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 5 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 9 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how lack of support in practicum affects their involvement with the course. Lack of support in practicum reflects pre-service teachers’ having the necessary aid and courage from the faculty’s monitor or school supervisors to facilitate their school induction or teaching practice. Table 5.50 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.50 The lack of support in practicum category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------------|---|
| lack of college support | <i>“Supervisors are all traditional. They graduated a long time ago, and expect me to teach the way they taught.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 3; DS: reflective journal) |
| | <i>“I missed my faculty monitor support in practicum. I was expecting to see him more for microteaching sessions’ follow up.”</i> (Pre-service teacher 12; DS: reflective journal) |

DS=Data Source

Time and support were highlighted as crucial elements to help pre-service teachers that were not the case in classroom practice. For instance, one participant stated:

“Sometimes I need to be sure of my practices, and I need more support from the lecturer.”

(Pre-service teacher 9; Data source: interview)

As revealed by data analysis, personal commitments deprived lecturers from helping pre-service teachers. Moreover, the visits of supervisors to pre-service teachers were seen as targeted to ensure that pre-service teachers were attending and covering the assigned teaching material according to the time plan. This could represent an additional pressure on the pre-servicer to finish the material even at the expense of practising teaching. For example, Pre-service teacher 1 stated:

“The administrative and supervisory practices are directing the teacher to cover the material in the first place, not to prepare them for life as good citizens. This is the reality.”

(Pre-service teacher 1; Data source: reflective journal)

Crowded classrooms

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 10 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 11 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how crowded classrooms affect their involvement with the course. The crowded classrooms category reflects pre-service teachers’ complaint of the big number of students in the classroom during practicum. Table 5.51 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.51 The crowded classrooms category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------------|--|
| Crowded classrooms | <i>“How can I apply the skills practised in the course with 70 students in the class?”</i> (Pre-service teacher 7; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Large class size had a negative impact on various areas in the process of teaching and learning. It affected the teacher’s ability to manage the classroom in practicum resulting in a lot of time wasted out of task. In addition, it made it difficult for them to establish a rapport with their students. Consequently, this could make it not possible for the teacher to provide the students with a favourable classroom learning environment. Almost all participants emphasised that the pre-service teacher could create a favourable classroom learning environment by giving students the chance to ask questions. However, this view was challenged in practice because of the large class size as large classes created a distant connection between the pre-service teachers and their students.

Supervisors' interference

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 4 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how supervisors' interference affects their involvement with the course. Supervisors' interference reflects pre-servicers experiencing unfair practices by supervisors, including interfering with their teaching, or giving them mixed messages during practicum. Table 5.52 shows an example of a code attributed to this category.

Table 5.52 The Supervisors' interference category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|---------------------------|--|
| Supervisors' interference | <i>"I was greatly embarrassed by my supervisor after he interrupted me to correct a mistake I had made."</i> (Pre-service teacher 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

As revealed by data analysis, one of the factors that affected the performance of pre-service teachers greatly and denied them from showing their full potential sometimes was the interference of their supervisors. In some instances when pre-service teachers made mistakes or failed to explain a point at the required level, supervisors stepped in, taking the place of the pre-service teachers in explaining the problematic point or correcting their mistakes. These actions embarrassed pre-service teachers greatly and damaged both their self-image and their image in the eyes of their students. Such actions made pre-service teachers unable to proceed with the explanation and caused them to experience instances of clear failure.

Material coverage

Research participants in the interview and reflective journal (i.e. 5 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their interview, 5 lecturers out of 7 in their interview and 6 pre-service teachers out of 15 in their reflective journal) indicated how the coverage of material affects their involvement with the course. Material coverage reflects pre-service teachers' having to finish the assigned governmental syllabus at the expense of students' needs and learning for life. Table 5.53 shows examples of codes attributed to this category.

Table 5.53 The Material coverage category

| Category | Examples of Coded data |
|--------------------------|---|
| Material Coverage | <i>"Both the curriculum material and the students' needs are important. They are related to one another."</i> (Lecturer 3; DS: interview) |
| | <i>Covering the teaching material before responding to pre-service teachers' needs is not useful for students' learning as responding to their needs might be a prerequisite of effective implementation of the curriculum material."</i> (Lecturer 1; DS: interview) |

DS=Data Source

Going through the teaching material was highlighted because of the importance of covering the lesson content as well as responding to students' needs. This balanced view was referred to by a participant, who stated:

"When the students need to know the difference between when to use 'shall' and 'will' in a grammar lesson and I ignore it, this will lead to the misuse of it and their language production will be affected."
(Pre-service teacher 3; Data source: interview)

This chapter presented the findings of the current study by sequentially dividing data into three sections according to the research questions. Finally, the major themes related to the intervening factors affecting the application of the microteaching course at the concerned faculty of education in the Egyptian context have been presented. The next chapter is devoted to the discussion of the key findings of the current study and those factors that influenced the application of the EFL microteaching course in Egypt.

Chapter Six

Discussion of Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the current study in response to literature, theories and previous studies. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part discusses the answers to the research questions and displays the factors associated with the discussion of data analysis, namely: affective factors, and environmental factors. The second part presents a visualization model for data analysis and discussion.

6.2 Discussions of Answers to Research Questions

Over the course of this study, many issues were investigated among the participants in the microteaching course to explore their perceptions of the focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the course for them at practicum. This account of the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3 is provided below.

6.2.1 The focuses of the microteaching course

The aim of Question 1 is to enhance our understanding of the focuses of the microteaching course as perceived by pre-service teachers and their lecturers. From the answers to Question 1 it is clear that pre-service teachers had accessible practice of some skills, including teaching skills, ELT skills, and mentoring and assessment skills. The answers to Question 1 provide an initial mapping of the nature, quality and intensity of those skills addressed in the course and provide details of the properties of the content used as a basis for practising the teaching skills.

Findings of the current study revealed that in reference to the Egyptian context, there are some factors related to the focuses of the course. First, no unified course vision exists to assist lecturers when practising the course with pre-service teachers and this makes lecturers involved in the microteaching course focus on

varied content and materials, leading to a microteaching course that is missing clear vision and unity. They have not been told about the goal: for example, it was clear that some pre-service teachers resisted the new course. Also, pre-service teachers struggled with the intent of their microteaching course. Was the aim of the course an opportunity to learn about teaching or was it an opportunity to learn about EFL?

According to Holigan (1997), there is a high correlation between theoretical knowledge about the subject and the classroom performance of pre-service teachers. A study by Jobling and Moni (2004) showed that pre-service teachers expressed their worries about not being adequately prepared with knowledge and skills that help them to teach learners. Research findings of this study revealed some shortcomings in the skills addressed in the course as a result of many cultural and contextual factors, such as: unclear vision and missing information, lecturers' experience, professional development, and the exam-driven culture. Oh, Yeung & Watkins (2011; 2000) state that teaching skills gained during teaching practice positively influence pre-service teachers' professional development and self-efficiency. Additionally, Klinzing (2002) suggests that such procedures as microteaching have the ability to transfer pre-service teachers' knowledge into practice.

Grossman (1991) summarised five general features leading to a successful pre-service teacher course: a sound vision of teaching a specific course; collaboration among lecturers and pre-service teachers; a mutual sense of ownership; proper scaffolding of learning; and lecturers' reflection about their teaching practices as well as their pre-service teachers' learning. Data analysis indicated that some of these features do not exist during the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt. First, there is no clear vision for the microteaching course. Second, lecturers have busy teaching schedules which results in having no opportunities to collaborate together or with pre-service teachers. Finally, using reflective practice is most unlikely to take place because of the high number of pre-service teachers and a shortage of staff.

Regarding lecturers' experience and professional development, there is a limited number of university lecturers and teaching assistants available to teach at the English department, Faculty of Education, in this Egyptian university. Neither the lecturers nor the teaching assistants had had pre-course training. Teaching assistants are holders of either Bachelor or Master's degrees, whereas university lecturers are holders of PhD degrees in TEFL. The lack of experienced teaching staff is a common problem that many universities in Egypt face, including the one concerned (Bijlani & Rangan, 2008). In addition, data indicate that the microteaching course is assigned to teaching assistants and demonstrators who are recent graduates from Faculties of Education. Thus, they do not have any teaching expertise about how microteaching is best practised, which may explain their inability to help pre-service teachers with many skills during the microteaching course in addition to their neglect of monitoring and assessment skills.

Findings of the current study revealed that Egyptian lecturers are not equipped with sufficient preparation that could take place through special programmes or through encouraging cooperative interaction among colleagues. Data indicate that professional development opportunities offered to Egyptian microteaching lecturers before the application of the course are limited, due to various reasons such as their overloaded schedules and insufficient funds. This is similar to findings in Ballantyne et al.'s (2000) study whose participants reported that their limited professional development chances affected their work efficiency. Therefore, lecturers' knowledge of different teaching strategies could be enhanced through ample professional development opportunities, if they have suitable training that equips them with the tools that can help them to reflect on their teaching practices and to acquire new knowledge and skills about the process of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Ramsden, Prosser, Trigwell & Martin (2007) highlighted that a suitable academic workload is an important element that contributes to improving lecturers' performance, as when workload increases, learning and teaching might not be as efficient as it should be.

During the microteaching course, the sessions are scheduled to be four times a week in the labs but sometimes they use the theatre hall which is not suitable for microteaching. This reflects the lack of labs, equipment, absence of accountability, deficiency of administrative organization and the need for an improvement in the quality of the higher education system (Ballantyne, Borthwick, & Packer, 2000; Wilson, Lizzio, & Ramsden, 1997). In relation to facilities, the participants in this study reported that their classes and labs are not well-equipped to accommodate all pre-service teachers, have a lack of modern facilities and are not prepared for the practising of the new course. During the microteaching course, there are additional difficulties related to the learning resources and facilities as the library resources are out-dated, the inter-library loan service is unavailable, the photocopying services are unusable, and the dedicated places for reading were rarely available due to the large number of pre-service teachers. Inadequate library facilities and resources and insufficient funding were reported among many factors leading to poor pre-service teacher performance and hindering pre-service teachers' learning opportunities and access to resources and facilities (Manjunath & Mallinath, 2007; Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). Thus, adequate library resources and service in addition to a supportive learning environment is crucial to enhance pre-service teachers' intellectual and cultural development.

Data analysis also indicate that Egyptian large classes are problematic in relation to a number of factors, such as overcrowding of the teaching halls and that the large number of pre-service teachers results in deficient teaching and learning. The English department classrooms at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt are filled with 160-250 pre-service teachers in small classrooms that do not accommodate all of them. This reality was described by Holliday's (1996) study in which he visited some Egyptian faculties of education. He highlighted how physical conditions and seating might affect the classroom culture. Through my personal experience, I can confirm that this is true of Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt where there is shortage of classrooms and, when classrooms are available, the seats are uncomfortable and insufficient to accommodate all the pre-service teachers. Also, as Holliday (1996) claimed, the distance that the environment of large classes creates can result in a loss of rapport among pre-service teachers and their lecturers.

Findings of the current study also revealed that the course assessment at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt lacks clear-cut criteria. It is based on the general rules of course assessment set by the Faculty of Education (i.e. 80% of the mark is for the oral test and 20% of the mark is based on the year's work). When asked about the way they assess pre-service teachers' microteaching, each lecturer referred to his/her own way of assessment. This means that microteaching lecturers did not use one fair tool to guide their marking schemes. As a result, pre-service teachers resort to memorization as a successful learning technique to get high scores in their final microteaching exam, as revealed by pre-service teachers during interview. Pre-service teachers resort to using memorization for two reasons: first, they save their time in the exam because they just recall what they have memorized; second, they lack self-confidence to think or reflect in English because they have not been trained to do so. Lecturers' beliefs and practices seem to be greatly influenced by the exam-oriented Egyptian educational system. This influence extends to include the way lecturers deal with the different components of the microteaching course as they mainly concentrate on summative evaluation and not the pre-service teachers' practices or reflective journals to structure formative evaluation during the course as, from their point of view, this is what the exams' authority exactly wants.

The exam-oriented nature of the educational scheme in Egypt (Hargreaves, 1997; 2001) is to a great extent responsible for the current status of EFL teaching and learning. Both pre-service teachers and their lecturers appear to consider that the most important thing is not to learn how to teach, but how to get a high score irrespective of teaching/learning. This resulted in private tutoring where pre-service teachers are trained on the different exam-taking skills (Elbadawy, Ahlburg, Assaad, & Levison, 2005). Exams are the only way reported by university lecturers and pre-service teachers to evaluate pre-service teachers at the end of the course or the academic year. The use of traditional exams for the microteaching course by nearly all microteaching lecturers at the concerned Faculty of Education in Egypt contributed to pre-service teachers' poor levels in EFL microteaching. Pre-service teachers answer orally one of the questions from four written on a paper, and then write about one of the microteaching topics.

According to Fink (2003), a good course should involve active forms of learning, and good systems of feedback, assessment and grading.

6.2.2 The difficulties encountered in the course

In Question 2 I investigated the difficulties of the microteaching course as perceived by pre-service teachers and lecturers within the microteaching sessions. Data analysis sought to uncover how pre-service teachers and lecturers perceive the difficulties which were encountered while dealing with the different components of the microteaching course, namely: peer group work, feedback, and reflection.

As revealed by data analysis, the application of the new EFL microteaching course is influenced by a number of factors such as beliefs, anxiety, motivation, and other factors that are intimately associated with contexts. These factors are crucial and of varying importance that, separately or in combination, affect the application of the microteaching course and contribute to answering this research question about EFL research participants' perceptions of the difficulties encountered in the course. These factors include affective factors and environmental factors.

6.2.2.1 Affective factors

The term affective factors stands for several variables that characterise pre-service teachers' inclinations; the most important of them are attitudes, motivation and anxiety. Motivation is considered to be influenced by the pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the microteaching course and both motivation and attitudes are greatly affected by anxiety.

Attitudes

According to social psychologists, attitudes are individually driven, that is, they are one's personal thoughts or feelings based on one's opinions; therefore, each individual has a different attitude toward the same thing (Eiser, 1987). Attitudes are greatly linked to the process of EFL learning and teaching because, as pointed out in the Routledge Encyclopedia (2000), "attitude not only affects pre-service teachers with respect to the processing of information and identification with

people or groups, but also with respect to motives and the relationship between language and culture, and their place within the existing linguistic and cultural diversity” (p.57). In addition to the individual’s attitudes, there are also social, cultural, and political factors that seem to influence the pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards EFL learning in the new course and shape how they interact with the learning context to initiate positive or negative attitudes in the pre-service teachers. Findings of the current study revealed that the lecturer’s curricular objectives, classroom activities and even personal attitudes play a role in influencing the pre-service teachers’ attitude to EFL microteaching. In fact, the pre-service teachers’ attitudes seem to greatly influence the course, more than any other factors; as research findings show, pre-service teachers have negative attitudes toward the learning situation or the microteaching course because there is a mismatch between their expectations and their lecturers’ curricular objectives. It is in this context that Breen and Littlejohn (2000) advocated shared decision-making based on meaningful discussion among pre-service teachers and their lecturers to organize the learning activities.

Motivation

Motivation is “the internal or external incentive that supports people to bear the weight and length of their hard work” (Dweck, 2006, 2007; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Encyclopedia, 2000, p. 425). It can be found in many contexts and different levels of EFL teaching and learning and correlates positively with successful learning outcomes. Most studies on motivation made a distinction between two types of motivation: integrative motivation and the instrumental one (Cooper & Fishman, 1977; Ehrman, 1996; Gardner & Smythe, 1975; Noels, 2001). The first kind of motivation is the integrative one which means a concern in an EFL learning to socio-culturally melt with its community. Instrumental motivation means concern in an EFL learning for achieving functional goals such as to work or to pass a test. Both types of motivation “have meaningful effects on learning” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, p. 69). Findings of the current study revealed that some EFL pre-service teachers are primarily motivated for extrinsic reasons driven by their needs to pass examinations and that their intrinsic motivation can be initiated if they enjoy their preparation programme which is another big difficulty in the Egyptian context with its lecture-centred, memorisation and lack of resources and

funds. Also, extrinsic motivation can be triggered by external prompts such as peer group work. The driving force for achieving excellence can be either intrinsic, or extrinsic or a combination of both (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It may be assumed that all three types of motivation influence EFL teaching and learning in different degrees depending on individual dispositions and different environmental and pedagogic contexts. To be primarily motivated for intrinsic reasons, the pre-service teachers have to constantly seek language-learning opportunities that enliven their learning effort and help them overcome any difficulties that might hinder their success.

Anxiety

Anxiety in the EFL context is mainly related to the fear of failure to learn the new language and the negative teachers' and peers' assessment or feedback (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). As revealed by data analysis, EFL pre-service teachers typically feel that they are incompetent about internalising the properties of their EFL, and about the inability to present themselves in a way consistent with their self-image and self-esteem. Language anxiety has also been found to correlate negatively with achievement such as in objective tests. It may also interfere with the storage and retrieval of information; thereby affecting their performance in the microteaching course. Although a clear picture of how anxiety actually affects EFL processes is yet to emerge, it appears that anxiety may have different effects at different stages of EFL teaching and learning depending on its interplay with other factors.

Lack of self-confidence is another psychological factor that affects course application. This was clearly stated in the participants' responses as a reason for their reluctance to group work or peer feedback. In the same context, university lecturers reported that their pre-service teachers lack self-confidence as they fear to talk or to express their opinions freely in microteaching. This fear is a result of many socio-cultural factors such as elder people's power over children and youth that leads to marginalizing their opinion and voice, not only in the family but the whole society. The effect of this lack of freedom of expression is seen in the microteaching course when pre-service teachers try to avoid feedback and reflection for fear of punishment. This is consistent with what Holliday (1996, p.

94) highlighted about Egyptian EFL learners who “were never in a position to negotiate what the teacher put on the blackboard”. The decisions made by the government or any authority in Egypt are unquestionable. The same thing applies to the small classroom in the Egyptian educational system where “a democratic class”, in which meaning is co-constructed and equal participation is everyone’s right, is rarely to be found. This pervading culture impedes developing critical and creative thinking skills.

6.2.2.4 Environmental factors

Environmental factors refer to the wider context in which language learning and teaching take place. These include national, social, cultural, political, economic, educational, and family contexts. The impact of these overlapping factors on EFL microteaching is revealed by research findings. I will focus on two closely connected factors: social and educational.

Social context

Social context refers to a range of language-learning environments such as home, classroom, and society as a whole. EFL involves more than psycholinguistic abilities, because it depends on historical, political, and social forces as well and any serious attempt to study EFL teaching and learning necessarily includes the study of social context as an important variable (Hall, 2002; Pavlenko, 2002). In fact, pre-service teachers’ performance is highly affected by social and cultural contexts.

Additionally, social context is critical because it shapes various learning and teaching aspects of the microteaching course such as the goal of EFL teaching and learning, and motivation to learn EFL functions in the Egyptian context. Specific social settings such as the classroom, in which pre-service teachers are in contact with the new language, have also been found to influence EFL teaching and learning. Siegel (2003); Wong-Fillmore (1989) revealed that social settings create and shape chances for EFL pre-service teachers to communicate with each other, thereby maximizing learning potential. The social context also shapes the role of pre-service teachers and their lecturers during the microteaching sessions, the

resources available for pre-service teachers, and the professional development opportunities that are available for pre-service teachers and their lecturers.

As a consequence of analysing the data, a number of patterns immediately became apparent. The first deals with group work, with regard to how EFL pre-service teachers established group work, how they carried it out and what learning outcomes were attained. Some groups were not dynamically collaborative. This is indicative of the fact that those pre-service teachers who were more inclined to participate in group work were more inclined to adapt their level of engagement between one who gives assistance and one who seeks assistance for the sake of finishing the task. Interestingly, these pre-service teachers were the ones who were far more committed to the overall success of their roles within the group. Another issue to arise from the data concerns the educational dimensions of constructed joint activity. Results show an extremely complex and interactive process among participants. This confirms previous researchers' assertions about the complexity of peer interaction (Freedman, 1992; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996).

Findings of the current study revealed that Egyptian microteaching lecturers perceive group work as being difficult. One of the reasons behind that perception could be that the Egyptian educational system, at both the pre-university and at the university level, is believed to encourage a competitive learning environment (Abdellah & Taher, 2007). In an Egyptian classroom, pre-service teachers are ranked according to achievement that is based on competition. This has resulted in lecturers' preparing memorization-based exams that allow only pre-service teachers who can memorize by heart to pass and require others who cannot memorize well to repeat the whole academic year. The application of microteaching in such a competitive learning environment, where lecturers encourage competitive learning that leads to pre-service teachers not being willing to share their ideas with their group, may help explain the lack of peer review and co-operative learning.

Educational context

The educational context refers to the reciprocal influence of educational institutions and settings in which learning and teaching operations are embedded (Bloome & Green, 1992). In the context of EFL teaching and learning, it is the educational context that shapes language policy, language planning, and the learning opportunities available to the EFL pre-service teachers. It is impossible to separate classroom life from the dynamics of political, educational, and societal institutions, because the experiences participants bring to the classroom are formulated and affected not only by the learning activity they have in the microteaching course, but also by the social and political context around them (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Findings of the current study revealed that the Egyptian educational context conditions whether pre-service teachers have the chance to freely express their opinions and are given the opportunity to become active users of EFL. This is why curriculum designers need to bear these factors in mind when planning a curriculum. As Tollefson (2002) and others pointed out, it is the educational context that determines the types as well as the goals of instructional programmes made available to the EFL pre-service teachers. Similarly Pavlenko (2002, p. 291) asserted the educational context can also “shape the relationship between power, status and identity” by determining the role power and authority can influence how pre-service teachers approach the learning process.

Regarding reflection, the present study findings revealed that Egyptian pre-service teachers' low proficiency in English is an influential factor contributing to their reflection difficulties. University lecturers reported that their pre-service teachers start university life with low English proficiency levels and this leads to many problems in the various academic courses in general and in EFL microteaching in particular. Pre-service teachers themselves find it difficult to reflect as a result of their proficiency levels that prevent them from expressing their thoughts on paper. Also, in reference to the educational scheme in Egypt, pre-service teachers in classrooms are not permitted the right to argue or negotiate meaning with their lecturers because of their fear of the lecturers' authority that leads to the suppression of their opinions.

The issue of reflection is a very complicated one especially for lecturers who are constrained by many difficulties such as a lack of training, limited time and a resources shortage that affects their involvement in the course (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Pre-service teachers' reflection was a difficult activity for many reasons: first, Egyptian pre-service teachers are not accustomed to such a way of thinking (Abdelhamid, 2010). Second, reflection needs writing which is not an easy task in a foreign language (Chan, 2010) as a result of the different grammatical and morphological system of Arabic and the L1 interference into their second as a result of that difference (Al-Khresheh, 2010).

Data analysis also revealed a number of factors that might have contributed to the difficulties Egyptian pre-service teachers encountered in the course such as lack of feedback. Research findings reveal lecturers' weakness in the point of assessing pre-service teachers' work. Through the interviews, half of them declared that they are not prepared enough to do their course and that feedback practices in the course were mainly used for summative assessment functions rather than formative ones. I can argue here that converting lecturers' feedback practices would transform not only lecturers' feedback beliefs (Ferguson, 1993; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Icy, 2008), but also the context that creates lecturers' work.

6.2.3 Helpfulness of the microteaching course in enhancing pre-service teachers' teaching performance in schools

To gauge the helpfulness of the microteaching course in pre-service teachers' practicum, data were gathered using the EFL pre-service teachers' questionnaire, interview, and reflective journal. Data analysis revealed that integrating microteaching as a new course created a learning context that contributes to enhance pre-service teachers' performance in practicum such as planning lessons, questioning, and lesson closure. Findings also revealed that although the pre-service teachers' anxiety level concerning microteaching was relatively high (Çakır, 2000; Deniz, 2011; Külahçı, 1994), they all support the helpfulness of microteaching applications in helping them enhance their teaching performance and increasing their knowledge about teaching by helping them to know how to adopt appropriate methods that are suitable to learners' needs and expectations.

This could be due to many reasons: first, pre-service teachers did have the chance to improve different teaching skills through the course. Second, EFL pre-service teachers were offered training to ensure the adequate development of their teaching skills that helped to relieve the practicum shock experienced by many of them at practicum.

As revealed by data analysis, there was a missing link between university and the schools where pre-service teachers started their practicum. Some of the lecturers are not eager about mentoring pre-service teachers in practicum because they find it difficult to have time for this due to their workload, fully occupied schedules and distance from school. This is why mentoring of pre-service teachers in practicum is virtually non-existent. Data analysis also showed lack of collaboration between the university setting and the school setting (Mills & Satterthwait, 2000; Shoffner & Morris, 2010). There is a need for both professions to understand the role of mentoring in supporting pre-service teachers both “academically and personally” (Goldstein & Freedman, 2003, p. 442).

The pre-service teachers found that microteaching helps them become more conscious of the different ways of attracting their learners’ attention and interest during the lesson. Before taking the course, the pre-service teachers had thought that the microteaching course is not necessary and will not be as useful as many other theoretical courses. However, findings reveal that microteaching has positively affected pre-service teachers’ performance in practicum and can be effective in enhancing their knowledge about teaching. The findings of this study also demonstrate the advantages of integrating microteaching in pre-service teacher preparation programmes for its useful experiences in giving pre-service teachers the chances to practice group work which plays an important role in influencing pre-service teachers’ efficacy levels and in the development of their teaching skills (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Zeichner, 2005). Research participants also state their wish to start building a strong connection between university and school for the sake of pre-service teachers.

6.3 Visualization Model of Data analysis and Discussion

A diagram is well suited to present woven details produced by the data analysis process, this diagram visually presents the logical links between and within data, therefore it enabled me to tease out a pattern of participant attempts to perceive the microteaching course. In this study, Figure 6.1 represents a model for the concluding theory that clarifies the complexity of EFL pre-service teachers' and their lecturers' efforts to perceive the microteaching course. The following Figure 6.1 shows the theory model in detail:

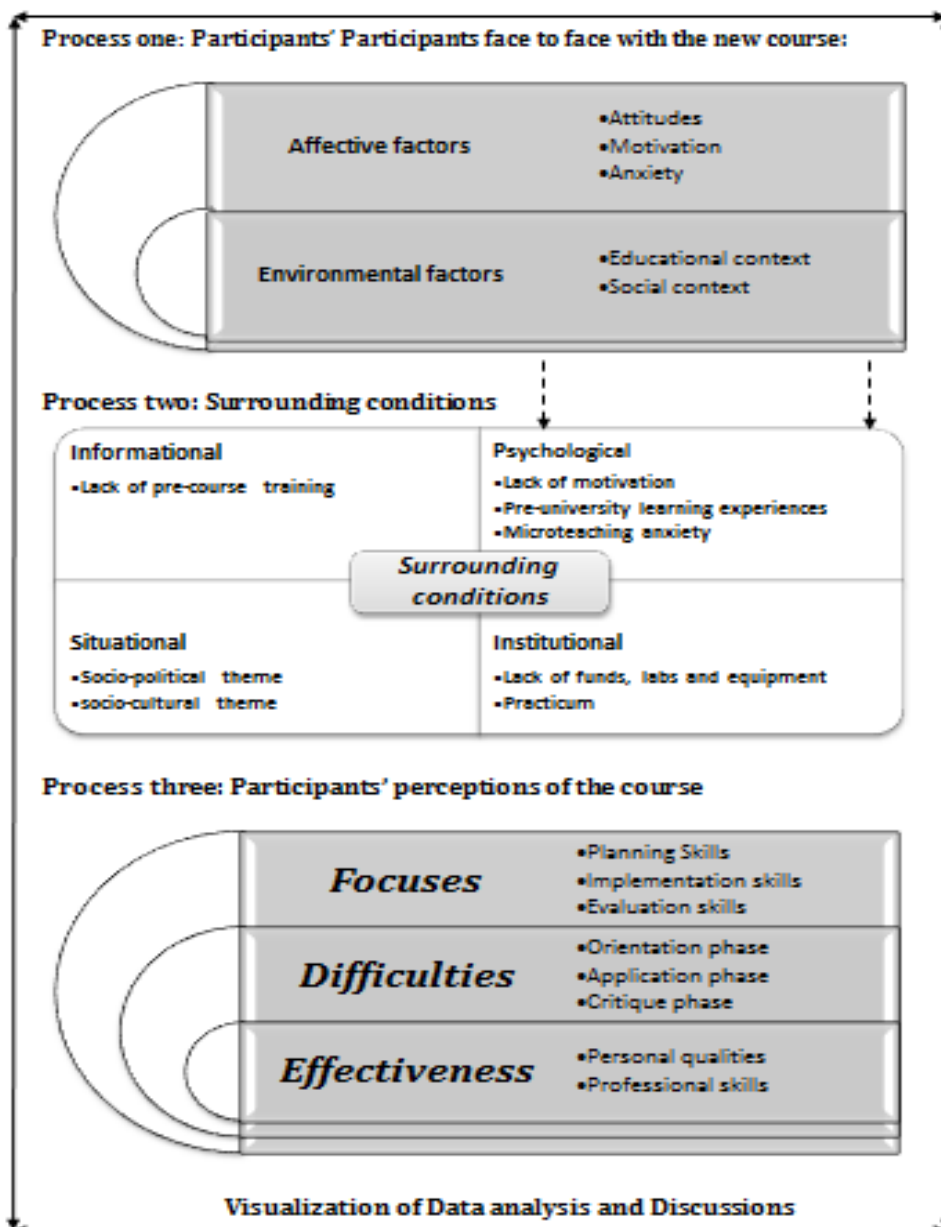


Figure 6.1 Visualization of data analysis and discussion

6.3.1 Participants face to face with the new course

The process of exploration leads the EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers through a complex process that includes three stages. The “Theory Model” begins with EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers, each of whom is a unique set of mental and emotional characteristics that vary greatly from one person to another. This complex set of personal conditions is influenced by other factors that affect the implementation of the new course in the Egyptian context and influence how the participants respond and react while engaging with the course, including: affective factors, and environmental factors.

6.3.2 Participants’ intervening conditions

As categories were examined, four emergent themes emerged that clarify the conditions surrounding the participants during the application of the new course in Egypt. Themes that speak about these intervening conditions are: informational theme, psychological theme, situational theme and institutional theme. Interaction between the sets of factors is a fluid exchange that brings the participants once again to a point of decision. As the participants weave reaction and response within the context of the microteaching course another point of decision presents. The participants may persist, even in the presence of obstacles, and remain on tasks to continue their course. Contributing categories and codes are similar to this step in Process 3 when the participants perceive the course’s focuses, difficulties and helpfulness. Thoughts and feelings manifested during this stage lead to the psychological theme, and are informed by categories that include lack of motivation, microteaching anxiety, and pre-university learning experiences.

6.3.3 Participants’ exploration of the new course

Participants’ reaction and response to their unique characteristics and the surrounding conditions resulted in a range of categories that emerged from the data and were further grouped into three core themes that speak about the EFL pre-service teachers and their lecturers’ perceptions of: (a) the course content or the skills practised in the course; (b) the difficulties encountered in the course; and (c) the helpfulness of the course to enhance their teaching performance at

practicum. Each core theme represents rich interaction between the participants and the course.

In this chapter I have tried to provide a descriptive and interpretive analysis of the collected data from different perspectives, according to the research questions of the current study. Findings of the data analysis as well as results of statistical analysis have been combined where appropriate to present the study findings in an integrative way. Many factors were found to affect the application of the new course and its helpfulness in developing pre-service teachers' teaching skills. These difficulties that Egyptian pre-servicers encounter in their microteaching are emphasised by their microteaching lecturers at university. However, pre-servicers attributed these difficulties to a number of factors, whereas lecturers attributed the same difficulties to other factors. There was also a mismatch between lecturers' views and their observed skills. These inconsistencies were discussed and interpreted deeply in this chapter.

The next chapter is devoted to presenting the research's implications and recommendations in the light of the study findings and the reviewed literature.

Chapter Seven

Implications, Recommendations and Suggestions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, some implications are discussed and recommendations put forward to overcome the difficulties that Egyptian pre-service teachers of English and their lecturers encountered during the microteaching course. In the second part, suggestions for further research are presented.

7.2 Implications and Recommendations of the Study

This study answered three core questions relating to the focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the microteaching course as perceived by the study participants. In the same vein, it opens up a number of additional questions for the field. Implications and recommendations derived from the study findings are appropriate for the Egyptian context of this research. Although it is not possible to generalize the findings collected from a single-context small sample, some significant implications and recommendations can be drawn and applied to similar contexts. For example; lecturers' feedback practices were probably influenced by the power relationships that are prevalent in a country like Egypt, where power is held by authority. Findings also revealed that feedback and assessment are given little attention as a course focus or component. Therefore, new feedback practices can be adopted by lecturers. The current section discusses some implications and recommendations to overcome the difficulties that Egyptian pre-service teachers of English and their lecturers encountered during the microteaching course.

7.2.1 Implications of the study:

7.2.1.1 Implications for curriculum development

It was revealed by the current study that the lecturers had their own goals for teaching, which were shaped by the learning contexts in the faculty of education. This view was clearly evident in some of the lecturers' responses and implies the need for engaging pre-service teachers in designing faculty curricula as pre-service

teachers should be, according to Verloop, Driel, & Meijer, (2001, p. 543) “the key point for any intervention or innovation”. This gives rise to base any research on pre-service teachers themselves for their significance for educational innovation. Engaging pre-service teachers in curriculum planning and design makes it informed, practical and relevant to their needs. Accordingly, examining the views of pre-service teachers about any suggested change is a pre-requisite for its effectiveness in practice as pre-service teachers, according to Verloop et al. (2001) are “the filters of any educational change” (p.454). Moreover, the design of a new curriculum should be based on an assessment of the reality of the teaching and learning situations so as to reflect the needs of the stakeholders. There should be a dialogue between pre-service teachers and curriculum designers. Curriculum development should also take into account the difficulties pre-service teachers face while doing their work and the proposed curriculum should take into account the constraints facing lecturers and how to overcome them.

Therefore, pre-service teachers must have their say when it comes to curriculum design. The current study attempted to let their voices be heard. Curriculum design which takes into account the local context of the teaching/learning process will not be detached from the learners’ needs. Pre-service teachers are in the best position to share in designing this curriculum and have their own say in developing the curriculum which should be based on pre-service teachers’ needs as well as being a mirror of their local context (Saad, 2010).

7.2.1.2 Implications for professional development

The findings of the study suggest that there is a need to cultivate a culture which gives rise to reflection and supports the development and delivery of reflective professional development (Enisa, 2010; Farrell, 2011; Hyun-Woo, 2011). Pre-service teachers demand chances to talk about what they know and do. Helping them to talk about their learning in a reflective way could enable lecturers to assess whether their aims are being achieved or not and identify the areas they wish to modify (Dorit, 2006). The findings of the current study revealed that feedback was considered an important component of the microteaching course that plays a significant role in EFL pre-service teachers’ teaching performance.

Peer feedback is a productive method to enable pre-service teachers to realise that they know a lot more than they think they do (Jones, Trier, & Richards, 2008).

The findings of the current study on microteaching highlighted the importance of building a strong connection between the university and the school. This implies that it is important for lecturers and school supervisors to participate in communities of practice and share ideas about teaching in seminars and conferences. For example, lecturers, supervisors and pre-service teachers need to participate actively on a regular basis in meetings or shared seminars and make it part of the annual assessment of the pre-service teacher's performance. Apart from fruitful discussions in these conferences, lecturers and teaching assistants should also be updated with the most recent development in TESOL which could enhance their pre-service teachers' professional development. The current study also aligns with research evidence highlighting the useful implications of research on teacher preparation programmes in the contexts of collaboration and mentoring. For example, (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Stanulis, Little, & Wibbens, 2012; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tomlinson, Hobson, & Malderez, 2010) point out why it is particularly useful in these areas.

Given that the findings of the current study are based on the views of EFL pre-service teachers and lecturers in the Egyptian context, another implication can be drawn based on their views: pre-service teachers should also know about the various ways of developing their knowledge, such as during pre-service teacher training; from experience; from previous schooling; from skill training; and from various sources of feedback. In addition, they should realise that the relationship between their knowledge and practice is not linear. Although their knowledge can sometimes inform their classroom decisions, it is, at other times, challenged in practice.

7.2.1.3 Implications for policy and practice

A point reinforced by many researchers is that pre-service teacher development is a process of continuous conversation among multiple actors (Wray, 2007) and that pre-service teachers are not passive recipients of content matter or teaching agents, only to reproduce the same classroom practices of the preceding

generation of lecturers. There is a need for more research into EFL pre-service teachers' education and for its inclusion as a major research focus (Teo, Chai, Hung, & Lee, 2008). Pre-service teachers' beliefs, policies, and practices are still particularly important in the Egyptian context where the need for qualified EFL teachers has risen. Yet, Egyptian faculties of education should exert more to put the philosophical, organisational, and pedagogical basis of EFL pre-service teacher education into consideration and to include not only educational requirements but also social, cultural and political ones as well. In this study, the microteaching course serves as the pre-service teachers' experience within a structured EFL pre-service teacher education degree programme.

The growing use of technology is another implication for research. In other words, pre-service teachers should be informed classroom users of such tools as video conferencing and the internet, among others. These current technological developments, which could be done by computer networks, have the ability to facilitate person-to-person communication. Also, language educators need to be provided with the ability to engage actively with new technologies in terms of exploring the ways in which such technologies actually transform and reconstitute classroom discourses and management practices, especially with the microteaching course that involves indirect EFL instruction achieved through lesson planning, and different classroom interactions and activities.

The findings of the current study showed a variety of contextual difficulties which faced the pre-service teachers and their lecturers when trying to apply their knowledge claims into classroom practice. Large class size was revealed to have a negative impact during the course sessions and at practicum. The findings in the current study revealed that the majority of EFL lecturers found it difficult to give their feedback to pre-service teachers because of the large class size. This difficulty calls for a policy action to increase the number of the microteaching labs in the colleges to reduce the number of pre-service teachers per session. This could provide a basic requirement for creating a supportive teaching and learning environment and consequently improve academic outcomes. With fewer pre-service teachers per class, more communicative activities could be carried out. The current practice does not encourage the role of the lecturer as a guide to facilitate

learning; instead, the pre-service teacher's own role in learning is dominant. There is also a need to equip Egyptian classrooms with modern technology such as interactive boards, educational audio and video players, and overhead projectors. This could help lecturers provide a stimulating learning environment to promote the progress and enjoyment of the learners. Another implication for policy and practice is to change the current seating arrangements in the Egyptian classroom to encourage collaborative learning. This seating problem was a difficulty for both pre-service teachers and lecturers during the course application. The arrangement of classroom seats in rows hinders pre-service teacher interaction and implies that the lecturer is the only source of knowledge in class. This is incongruent with the need to put more emphasis on pre-service teacher-centred education.

The findings of the current study revealed that pre-service teachers need more support and resources to be able to transfer their knowledge into practice. Mentoring pre-service teachers should also be encouraged by increasing the number of mentors and research into the development of teaching capability (Hobson et al., 2009; Stanulis et al., 2012; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tomlinson et al., 2010), as well as by research into mentoring itself that can have an important role in pre-service teacher education programmes.

Reforming the exam system should also be among the priorities for enhancing the educational service. It is essential to transform the view that examinations are the ultimate goal of the educational process and replace it with the view that examinations should be one part of the endeavour. It seems inevitable that a change in attitudes towards teaching and learning EFL listening and speaking is bound to including these skills in the exam system. This will provide a motive for lecturers and pre-service teachers to find value, even if caused extrinsically, in listening to and speaking the target language. Language is a whole system and unless all language skills are tested in the Egyptian examination system, the over-emphasis on writing and reading at the expense of listening and speaking will continue.

7.2.1.4 Implications for educational research

The current study could also have implications for further educational research as there is a need to promote the qualitative mode of inquiry and the interpretive-constructivist research framework among the educational research communities in Egypt (Abdelhamid, 2010; Abdollahzadeh, 2010; Gahin, 2001). The current study tries to acknowledge the multiple realities of the research participants and letting them construct their own knowledge and reflect upon their own practice; and by mainly using in-depth interviewing, classroom observation followed by stimulated recall interview sessions, and open-ended questions in the questionnaire, an attempt is being made to help others realise the suitability of the qualitative mode of inquiry in providing profound insights into the complexity of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt.

7.2.2 Recommendations of the study:

7.2.2.1 Recommendations for research participants

Pre-service teachers

An adequate introduction to the microteaching course should precede the actual sessions. This should be followed by some interactive sessions on how to give and receive feedback, which incorporate role plays and peer group work and also how to use the reflective journal. This will help to sensitise everyone who has a role in the microteaching course and practicum to be more receptive to constructive suggestions and to work together for achieving one goal which is well-prepared pre-service teachers. Also, this orientation process will help reduce pre-service teachers' worries about the new course and its components such as feedback and reflection. Pre-service teachers should be given the advice and support they need by receiving pre-session training in addition to some written material about the different activities of the course. Also, constructive feedback and video ground rules should be discussed and agreed upon before the beginning of the course and the rationale for having the microteaching course should be clarified by the lecturers. The pre-service teachers should know when they will act as pre-service teachers, students or as video operators. Concerning feedback and evaluation, they should know that feedback in the microteaching course mainly aims at helping pre-

service teachers achieve the maximum benefit from the training and to improve their performance. Moreover, the pre-service teachers should bear in mind that although no one wants one's weaknesses to be shown, identifying these points are very important to enhance the application of executing the teaching skill of concern (McIntyre et al., 1977). It also helped the more confident pre-service teachers to tone down their manner and offer ideas for improvement.

Lecturers

University lecturers are in need of better preparation to meet their pre-service teachers' needs. This preparation could take the form of faculty meetings that allow lecturers to talk about and exchange their best teaching practices, training in curriculum development, a range of teaching and assessment strategies, and technology. Once the quality of teaching is improved the quality of pre-service teachers' learning opportunities will improve as well. When lecturers use teacher-centred methods such as lecturing and reading from books, they transmit themselves onto a course book, or a sheet of paper and this not what the microteaching course aims at. Also, lecturers are not just knowledge transmitters but supporters in the learning process to help their pre-service teachers, as Beydogan (2002) suggests, develop a view on life itself. For an effective preparation programme, lecturers need to be aware of the teaching models and strategies (Awidi, 2008; Beran & Violato, 2005) that are based on the practice-oriented learner-centred model (Nielsen, 2004). In this context, lecturers should lead pre-service teachers to build knowledge in their minds (Beydogan, 2002), and enhance the communication paths with their pre-service teachers to create, as (Orvis & Ratwani, 2010) pinpoint, a fruitful learning context; especially that the positive role of a lecturer's constructive activities in the microteaching sessions is very important.

Most of the faculties of educations' lecturers did not have any up-to-date training to help them develop pre-service teachers' teaching competencies (Vogt & Rogalla, 2009) especially when teaching a foreign language, which is usually viewed as a stressful situation in which learners face many problems in the classroom. Such a situation demands a knowledgeable lecturer in the field of teaching and learning,

and high standards of professional knowledge and professional conduct as well. As a result of having a twofold task represented in preparing pre-service teachers for their presentation and providing feedback for the pre-service teacher after his presentation, thus, lecturers at the beginning of the academic programme should be given the chance to discuss any concerns they might have about the course, as good lecturers according to Shoffner & Morris (2010) equals professional competency, mentoring, and integrating pedagogy and relationship in the classroom. In other words, lecturers need to have subject matter knowledge in addition to a deep knowledge about pre-service teachers' social, emotional, and intellectual development (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Melanie, 2009). I can argue here that among the most important qualities that distinguish the best lecturers from the others are continuous research for better knowledge; and interest in, and respect for pre-service teachers.

Helping Egyptian lecturers to be aware of what pre-service teachers grasp during the course could give them new insights about their pre-service teachers' learning and help educators to design better pre-service teacher educational experiences, in ways that engage pre-service teachers in learning content through reasoning, and problem-solving (Chamoso, Cáceres, & Azcárate, 2012; Halim, Meerah, & Buang, 2010). I purposely selected the goal for the lecturers' preparation to draw the lecturers' attention toward engaging EFL pre-service teachers in higher order thinking and reflecting activities. For example, during the planning and decision-making stages, the groups could discuss and rethink their engagement in the sessions, to promote pre-service teachers' construction and learning of the content by focussing on the learning process itself rather than just practising a skill. This could help pre-service teachers to develop knowledge that is adjusted according to their understanding (Goldschmidt & Phelps, 2010).

This could be done through continual staff meetings which aim to cooperatively formulate the learning goals through extensive discussion. Also, lecturers can apply team teaching so that one plans a lesson according to the formulated goals. Then another one of the team applies it while the others observe while collecting

evidence on pre-service teachers' learning and participation. Finally, members of the team amend the lesson to better achieve the lesson objectives. What is really important is that the school supervisor is welcomed to adjoin the group for the purpose of giving advice during lesson application or evaluation, and to make the connection between the university and the school more tangible and powerful. Finally, lecturers summarize their learning and teaching in a detailed report adding new questions to think about and consider in subsequent lessons (Demirkaya & Atayeter, 2011). The use of team teaching aims at providing maximum feedback to the pre-service teachers during the sessions. I can argue here that it is a necessary practical requirement in the course because if the lecturers need to use the video recording then therefore, they will not effectively listen to and observe pre-service teachers' presentations. According to Nevin, Thousand, & Villa, (2009), the success of team teaching is based on the team's awareness of the quality of the planning and the relationships among its members.

School supervisors

The role of supervision is very important to pre-service teacher preparation and critical for the practicum success. The supervisor-pre-service teacher relationship should be a dialogical one to form a bridge between theory and practice. In the Egyptian context, one cannot exactly know what pre-service teachers' supervision has achieved especially given that pre-service teachers are assessed by the school supervisors during randomly selected class periods. Also, training usually involves entirely different lessons, different classes, and different grade levels. Inviting supervisors to attend the microteaching sessions is considered an important and "safe" issue as the focus is on helping pre-service teachers, as most of them are sensitive about having supervisors observe them in their classrooms.

Inviting the supervisor to attend the critique period following the micro-lesson gives power to both the pre-service teachers and the supervisor to realistically discuss pre-service teachers' growth within their mutual concern and have a clear picture of their goals ahead of time. Then pre-service teachers can immediately apply, in the re-teach stage, their supervisor's recommendations. Another benefit of the supervisor attending the sessions is to examine new teaching techniques

before their usage in the classroom as even the most experienced supervisors can make serious misjudgements about the pre-service teacher's experience or maturity required to learn.

Mentors

Mentoring plays an essential role in supporting pre-service teachers' induction of their practicum to encourage them to be qualified teachers in the profession (Keenan, 2009; Sabar, 2004). Mentoring is supporting pre-service teachers to assist the development of their expertise and to facilitate their first step on the path of their teaching profession. Mentoring pre-service teachers is supported by the acquisition of professional knowledge, socio-cultural theories, reflective practice, and practical reasoning (Hobson et al., 2009; Stanulis et al., 2012; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tomlinson et al., 2010). It facilitates the transition from self-contained classrooms to school settings (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011).

The learning environment

For the purpose of the microteaching session to be an authentic class within time constraints (Ismail, 2011), the microteaching sessions should take place in a special laboratory that is prepared with video camera, microphone, and screen television. Zoom camera functions should be available to record the teaching session's activities and each pre-service teacher's performance should be recorded on an individual videotape. The laboratory room should also include audio-visual aids, whiteboard and an overhead projector. Doors have to be closed to prevent interruption and decrease noise to achieve the aim of the sessions which is practising in a safe and comfortable environment. The sessions' schedule should be announced early to give pre-service teachers enough time for preparation. Also, other support materials are to be ready for each session.

Materials could be varied and derived from pre-service teachers' interests in a way that engages pre-service teachers in their learning. Therefore, I suggest giving pre-service teachers the chance to search for and find their own materials during the planning of their microteaching lessons. This could be achieved through browsing

the internet, or reading magazines, newspaper articles or book chapters. Using the internet helps pre-service teachers increase their schemata about the teaching skills before practice through listening, reading, watching and critically analysing the information they collect. Discussing and planning with their peers and their lecturers also helps them become aware of the different skills required during microteaching. Also, brainstorming, and using more structured formats such as lists or guided questions, can help generate the ideas and promote pre-service teachers' learning skills (Chamoso et al., 2012; Kramarski & Michalsky, 2010).

7.2.2.2 Recommendations for course application

Group work

Group work is the first step in the preparation cycle and it includes planning, decision making, and group discussion. The research implies creating opportunities for peer group work to be involved in cooperative planning, developing new materials, and experimenting with new ways of presentation, analysing, reflecting, and revising lessons taught to their peers. Motivating groups to work together during the microteaching course was a big challenge for the pre-service teachers that pushes them from working individually to collaborating in their group. For a solution to that, the research implies that managing pre-service teachers' involvement with group work by fostering their active engagement in (1) planning, (2) decision making and (3) group discussions is critical to the successful professional development of pre-service teachers. Especially given that according to (Slavin, 2010), designing and implementing cooperative tasks could help pre-service teachers enhance their peer group strategies and individual accountability within the group. The following Figure 7.1 shows peer group work as implied by the research.

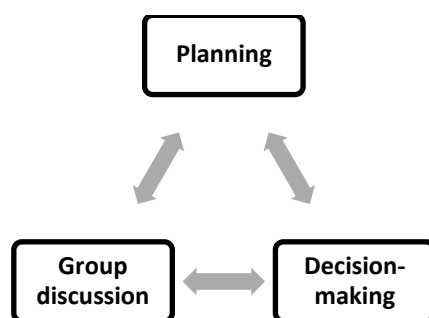


Figure 7.1 Peer-group work as suggested by the researcher

The process of collaborative lesson planning is to open up discussions about the teaching skill concerned, the content of the lesson and its teaching materials. So, the lesson plan is formulated by taking the advice of all pre-service teachers in the group. In decision making, the groups also can use information from the internet and books, and think about other choices and make decisions concerning, for example, introducing new words or grammar during their lessons. Pre-service teachers should participate actively in deciding what and how to teach (Ian, 1992). In group discussion, the goal is to help pre-service teachers analyse their lesson plans in light of goals and discuss issues like questioning, lesson flow, and classroom management to make curricular choices and deepen their understanding of the teaching content. Pre-service teachers can move through these cycles if they receive appropriate support during planning by using, for example, lesson plans and observation forms that are accompanied by the lecturer's questions to help pre-service teachers learn to critique and to enhance their observation and feedback abilities.

The capacity of pre-service teachers to attain some level of a shared responsibility for learning and a strong sense of group accountability for task completion is another important point that consistently emerges from the data. Research tools highlight that there are immediate mutual needs of support and assistance where differing levels of L2 proficiency, cultural awareness, teaching experience, artistic talent, organisational skills, and content knowledge are pooled and shared for personal/professional and collective benefit. The need for support and to address the development of shared responsibility is modelled through a range of dialogic engagements. These include pre-service teachers taking on within the group a

number of managed obligations, the primary duty consisting of on-going active participation and engagement with the context at hand. Other obligations consist of organising group interaction, guiding collective lesson construction, initiating and qualifying new information, and modelling practices. These mediated means demonstrate that the pre-service teachers' capacity to shoulder responsibility is multidimensional and complex.

Video

Because the aim of preparing pre-service teachers is to encourage them to think critically on their own learning and teaching strategies, this research implies extending the video-viewing activities to include pre-viewing and guiding activities.

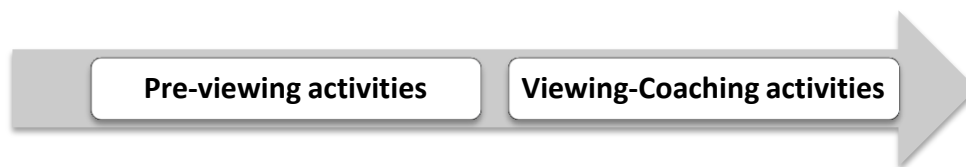


Figure 7.2 Video viewing activities as implied by the research

When videotapes are used, once the taping has been accomplished, each group begins with a warm-up activity to secure pre-service teachers' involvement such as a brief presentation to review relevant teaching principles and techniques while participants try to identify the effective teaching strategies in use. The guiding questions resulting from the warm-up activity allow pre-service teachers to view the video differently and this can be very motivating for them. The benefits of video-guiding in pre-service teacher preparation are evidenced by literature on this topic; it provides pre-service teachers with immediate feedback that can help them see their weaknesses and strengths, improve their weaknesses and increase their self-confidence. In video guiding the lecturer can use a teaching behaviours checklist to help guide observation and discussion and to encourage them to observe their teaching behaviours and to practise the strategies they have learned during the course and adapt them to their needs (Cheng, Chan, Tang, & Cheng, 2009). Moreover, video guiding offers pre-service teachers provocations for

reflection on their own teaching practices and facilitates learning about feedback, evaluation and assessment.

Feedback and evaluation

There are five steps implied by the research as shown in the following Figure 7.3

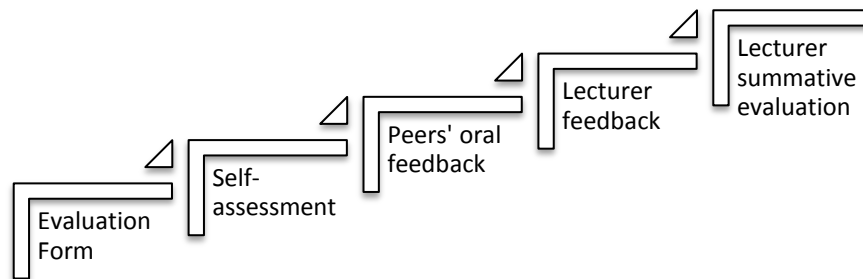


Figure 7.3 Feedback/Evaluation Steps as implied by the research

In this step of the evaluation process, the pre-service teachers are given the pre-designed evaluation forms to fill in concerning the video recording related to their session. This form concentrates on accomplishing lesson objectives, classroom interactions and lesson closure. As a result of feedback being most acceptable to the pre-service teacher if it constitutes part of their self-assessment process, the pre-service teachers in the next step need to orally evaluate their performance. Then, they receive oral feedback from their peers in turn. The lecturers could intervene if they feel feedback to be destructive, or inappropriately positive, to refocus the discussion on constructive feedback. In the fourth stage, the lecturers give their own feedback as a result of their observations with a chance to model the strategies of delivering feedback and reinforcing the good points of the skills presented by the pre-service teacher. This is crucial for pre-service teachers, who find constructive feedback difficult and for those who overly criticize their teaching performance. Finally, the lecturers provide a summative evaluation that should focus on linking between the course theoretical content and the practical experiences of pre-service teachers.

Reflection

Reflection could also be considered an essential component of a life-long process of professional growth as reflective pre-service teachers have to be able to criticize and argue for their practices in planning, implementation and evaluation (Armutcu & Yaman, 2010). Practising reflection gives pre-service teachers the chance to carefully analyse situations, examine assumptions and beliefs and make decisions that are the base for further improvement. In fact, reflection gives the profession a sense of professionalism and makes work highly rewarding (Ramin, 2007; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008). To be reflective is one of the important goals that most pre-service teacher programmes aim to foster in their novice teachers (Barry, 2007). This is similar to the studies of Richards, (1998); and Richards & Lockhart, (1996) about pre-service teachers and the role microteaching plays in helping pre-service teachers to reflect on their beliefs. Barry; Philip (2007; 2006) add that including reflective practices in EFL pre-service teacher preparation programmes supports the transference of the skills acquired during practice into their practicum, as shown in the following Figure 7.4

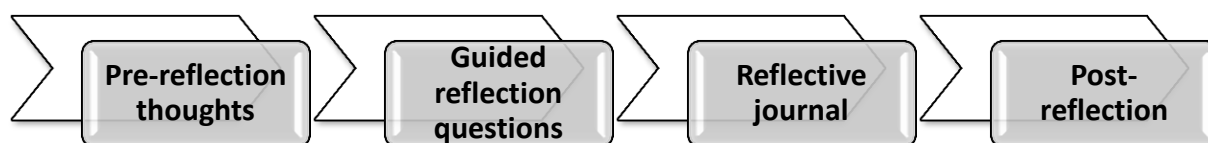


Figure 7.4 Reflection practices as implied by the research

The above figure shows that Step One included pre-reflection thoughts about the materials used, the lesson plan, and analysis of the teaching lesson, in addition to suggestions for teaching the lesson that follows. Then, in the second step, reflection is partially guided by questions such as: Are you satisfied with your lesson, what influenced the way the lesson was taught? And, what was learned about teaching and learning? This is to make connections between theory and practice (Guilherme, 2002) and to promote critical thinking while designing the teaching activities. During guided reflection, one-to-one interaction of the pre-service teacher with their lecturer during the microteaching sessions supports their commitment to socialization, and intellectual and professional principles (Erawan, 2011; Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Lecturers' support also helps decrease pre-service teachers' anxiety and influences their level of efficacy (Clift & Brady, 2005).

The success of the microteaching course depends on giving pre-service teachers the chance to reflect on their learning and teaching. This is why the research encourages pre-service teachers to use reflective journals which are considered a personal record of the pre-service teacher's learning and teaching experiences. So, they can record and reflect upon their observations to explore their ways of thinking (Chirema, 2007). It challenges mainly someone's reactions to the experience he is having. It is in fact a record of reflections and thoughts. It records the expansion of one's training challenges and the reasons that improvement occurred (Chirema, 2007). In the present study, reflective journals are defined as a record of pre-service teachers' experiences or their daily activities regarding classroom microteaching and instruction. The writer expresses his or her feelings and experiences in relation to these activities and how the experiences or activities were managed. Through this process, the pre-service teachers become cognisant of their own practice, recognizing patterns of events and their responses to these, and possibly identifying their learning needs.

The internet social media site Facebook played an important part in the success of the Egyptian revolution, and it can also have a prominent part in the success of reflection in the microteaching course. At the post-reflection step, the ideas the pre-servicers come up with about what they expect to do, what they find, and what they would like to change during their teaching sessions can be posted in an online forum or Facebook account where the pre-service teachers, lecturers and school supervisors are members of this account. Pre-service teachers should keep a weekly update on how they feel while this experience is developing. They also can post their ideas and suggestions on how they might develop their ideas into teaching activities. Pre-service teachers can also post selections from their reflective journal weekly for discussion with their peers. Videos can be downloaded into the Facebook account and speak about the moments that they feel most proud of in their teaching and other moments where they feel more suggestions are needed for improving their teaching performance.

School-college partnership

Pre-service teachers receive mixed messages regarding their duties within a schooling context. Dealing with these messages creates one of the biggest challenges for pre-service teachers for many reasons: first, the classroom reality differs from the microteaching sessions and pre-service teachers' expectations. Second, there is a growing cultural gap between pre-service teachers and their practicum's supervisors. Third, there is an inconsistency between what they expect before starting their practicum and what they encounter in the school (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999) especially in some aspects such as management skills.

Pre-service teachers' professional development is a shared responsibility divided between university and school to, as Benton-Kupper (2001) suggested, make an easy transitional process between the university and the practicum. This implication according to (Persellin & Goodrick, 2010) is based on the collaborative partnerships of Furlong (2000) who recognizes three types of partnerships, because the increased pressure to build a partnership with the schools is one of the most useful ways for lecturers to keep continuous communication with supervisors and the in-service English teacher. This partnership could be a two-sided one. First, the school supervisor can be invited by the university to attend the microteaching sessions. Second, pre-service teachers with their lecturers can be invited by the school to carry out some microteaching sessions on the school site. This is really important, especially for pre-service teachers who are worried about teaching in a public school setting.

This training, which proceeded under the university lecturer's and the school supervisors' guidance according to Tuli & File (2009), is very useful for pre-service teachers to face their worries and challenges that were encountered during the course. As a result of the busy schedules and responsibilities of both university lecturers and school supervisors, it is really important to offer a realistic opportunity for collaboration between university and school by which all of them would mutually benefit. It is also important to discuss issues such as time constraints. Finally, this partnership is powerful in closing that gap between theory

and practice as, according to Rassaei & Moinzadeh (2011) it is experimenting and thinking about different classroom practices from different perspectives as the lecturer is not the only one who aims at supporting pre-service teachers, and the isolation of the microteaching (Su, 2011) can lead lecturers' work to be an individual effort. Rather than working apart, pre-service teachers, lecturers and school supervisors should explore opportunities to work together (Shoffnera & Morris, 2010). Day & Smethem (2010) also call for collaboration between lecturers and school supervisors for its importance in helping pre-service teachers gain the skills to build their future careers. What is implicated in this research involves connection, communication and consultation seminars, as shown in the following Figure 7.5:

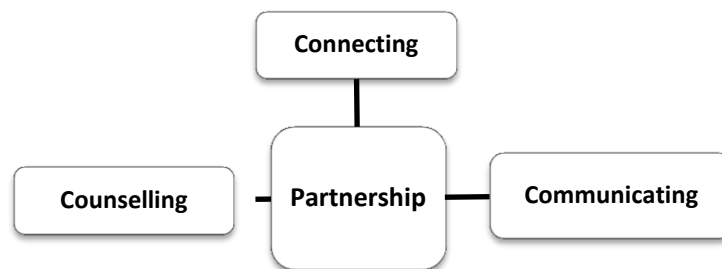


Figure 7.5 University-School partnership as implied by the research

Connecting at the university

At the university, lecturers and school supervisors should construct a community of practice where they share their expertise about the teaching profession, and intensify their knowledge and experience through continuous interaction (Pane, 2010) to support pre-service teachers' requirements. Planning for this collaboration should begin early, at the university level, where school supervisors and lecturers should be trained on the necessary skills to support each other and enhance the academic success of their pre-service teachers (Beesley, 2004, p. 267). This community of practice provides lecturers and school supervisors with a cognisance of their forthcoming collaboration for enhancing pre-service teachers' performance.

What is really important is that the support that lecturers provided to their pre-service teachers when the microteaching course starts should not be decreased at the end of the course, but rather change the kind and form of that support to increase their teaching efficacy at their practicum. Also, small groups of school students can be at the university for lessons taught by pre-service teachers to enhance their classroom management skills (Kayaa, Lundeenb, & Wolfgangc, 2010). Moreover, in-service teachers can also be allowed to enter the university site to use its facilities and resources to update their knowledge and skills.

Communication

The missing communication between lecturers and school supervisors decreases their collaboration and their understanding of the advantages they can offer to each other. On the school site, a question-and-answer session can be executed at the end of class, with the pre-service teachers, lecturers and school supervisor sharing their concerns together. During the microteaching session, the pre-service teachers have the chance to test different activities supervisors employ when working with them.

Counselling seminars

The purpose of these seminars is to explain how helpful school supervisors could be to pre-service teachers and to explain the different aspects of their role in the schools. By participating in these seminars, the pre-service teachers learn how to interact with their school supervisors and experienced teachers on a variety of issues to provoke discussion among the pre-service teachers and to emphasize the solutions suitable to the situation, not just giving yes or no answers. At the beginning of the seminars, the school supervisor provided hand-outs with information on their qualifications and expertise and the ways they are prepared to help pre-service teachers and collaborate with lecturers (Shoffner & Morris, 2010). Also, the school supervisor gained insight into the needs and concerns of the pre-service teachers. Therefore, counselling seminars can help both supervisors and lecturers to play a powerful role in the emotional, intellectual and social development of pre-service teachers.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The present study suggests some areas that need further investigation. It investigated the pre-service teacher participants' perceptions of the different microteaching focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the course. This study suggested some implications for EFL microteaching in Egypt. If successfully implemented, these implications could contribute to Egyptian pre-service teachers' skills development and overcome the various difficulties that are currently in place. They could also be adopted at the pre-university level to develop peer group work and reflection as findings of the current study showed that reflection and peer group work receive very little attention in the Egyptian microteaching classroom. This study has also explored the lecturers' perceptions of the microteaching focuses, difficulties and helpfulness. However, it did not evaluate the microteaching course. Thus, it is suggested to carry out an evaluative study of the microteaching course at the English Department, at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt from different perspectives.

Another study could be carried out to deeply explore the relationship between Egyptian pre-service teachers' learning in the microteaching course and their teaching at different schools' practicum. This will pinpoint the transfer of what they have learnt to their future profession. Additionally, this study will reveal the different skills that they have already mastered and those that need more attention.

Another issue that is worth investigating is Egyptian microteaching lecturers' feedback practices. More specifically, future research can specifically address lecturers' feedback strategies and measure the effect of this feedback on their motivation, self-esteem and the content of the microteaching course in general and their learning in particular. Moreover, examining pre-service teachers' active role in feedback practices such as self-assessment and peer review is also an important area for investigation. Finally, future research can investigate the feasibility of alternative feedback modes such as audio-feedback and electronic feedback on improving pre-service teachers' performance in microteaching.

Examining the quality of the current assessment practices of Egyptian lecturers and their relation to developing pre-service teachers' written performance is a suggested area for future studies. It is also worth identifying the rationale behind their use of the holistic, analytical or any other alternative assessment techniques. Exploring the gap between different Egyptian university lecturers' practices of microteaching is an area worth of investigation. This study is expected to highlight lecturers' pedagogical practices and factors hindering or supporting any required change. Also, further research is needed in the area of video-viewing to understand the effects of video on pre-service teacher professional development. Another study is needed to explore Egyptian university pre-service teachers' professional development from different perspectives: lecturers, college mentors, trainers and supervisors. This study could possibly lead to identifying the factors that hinder or support their professional development programmes at the university level.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations which merit discussion. One of them is the tacit nature of perceptions unavoidably presented with inherent interpretational issues, which raise potential questions about representational accuracy. Furthermore, the unique nature of the course and the implicit curriculum presented to these pre-service teachers by the lecturers cannot be duplicated. However, the assertions presented are in agreement with many made in research works throughout EFL and teacher education literature. Many perceptions are tacit, which means misinterpretation of one's own perceptions or beliefs and/or misinterpretations when inferring other peoples' perceptions are real possibilities. Because living perceptions are an unknowable, unverifiable, intangible abstraction, there is no possible way to assess the accuracy of any given interpretation. I observe that the representations created with and for study participants within this study are consensual constructions of social and physical realities, based upon our own fallible and incomplete perceptions of those realities. Therefore, despite our sincere and good-faith efforts to the contrary, it is possible that these constructions may or may not represent the participants' perceptions they purport to, and may have left some features unrepresented.

7.5 Researcher Reflective Thoughts

My MPhil modules at the Graduate School of Education, Exeter University, namely: Nature of Educational Enquiry, Interpretive Methodologies, Communicating Educational Research and Scientific Methodologies subjected me to understand that structuring my teaching does not only mean having a teaching job but it is my learning experience in both the school and at the university. Before being a student at Exeter University, my most important goals as a student were finishing my work on time, and having good exam scores; and to achieve these goals I developed some skills such as writing notes of the teachers' lectures, memorizing textbooks and practising drill sheets repeatedly to be sure that I was well-prepared for the exams. Working with my peers and active interaction in the sessions were not my concern as they were not emphasized by lecturers and did not affect my good exam scores. After inquiring into my own way of learning and the multiple difficulties that teachers experience during the process of educational change, I now understand that change for teachers change is not just memorizing new concepts or applying new skills but is more concerned with unique identity transformation, the ability of understanding the new curriculum and making connection to the worlds in which they live and work.

All students, myself included, live within inconsistent realities which are characterized by, according to Britzman (2003, p. 26), the tension between the objective and the subjective, knowledge and experience, and theory and practice. Reflecting upon such experiences that are related to this tension made me attempt to investigate teachers' perceptions of the new microteaching implementation as an educational change. I am also impelled by the arguments and presentations on interpretive methodologies calling for questions which can open up possibilities, and the regular mentoring received from my supervisors stimulated my capacity for identifying thoughts, reflective and interpretive experiences, and hopes for understanding curriculum implementation.

7.6 Conclusion

This Ph.D. is a culmination of a personal and professional research journey. The current study explored how pre-service teachers and their lecturers perceive the focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education in Egypt. In Chapter 3, I examined microteaching in terms of its historical, pedagogical, and sociocultural growth. The description of this growth was underpinned throughout by a critical analysis of microteaching research. Over the years, this research has come to justify, frame and explain the on-going spread and success of microteaching as an important pedagogical component in EFL education programmes. As a consequence of this in-depth analysis, gaps within the research literature were identified. Of these gaps, examples are pre-service teachers' planning during the microteaching course and how lecturers model the skills practised in the course. This was reinforced by an analysis of the literature from related discipline areas such as Educational change, EFL pre-service teacher preparation programmes, microteaching and foreign language teaching and learning. This research offered a means to investigate and make sense of the focuses, difficulties and helpfulness of the course within the microteaching practice. In Chapter 4 a framework was outlined in order to illustrate how pre-service teachers and their lecturers perceive the microteaching course through the strategic use of a combination of methodological tools. Data arising from three elicitation instruments were presented and analysed. A number of themes emerge from the data analysis include socio cultural, contextual and informational issues. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers encountered many difficulties in their microteaching before they even start planning their microteaching until they finalised it. These difficulties ranged from peer group work, feedback and reflection to socio-cultural, psychological and socio-political difficulties.

In the light of the findings, the current study has contributed theoretically and pedagogically to knowledge in general and to EFL microteaching within the Arab world and the Egyptian context in particular. The contribution is represented in proposing some implications that suit the Egyptian context so as to improve the application of the new course in the Egyptian context and to motivate pre-service

teachers for their future work. To sum up, this research has come up with the following important outcomes:

- It provides an awareness of the microteaching role in enhancing pre-service teachers' teaching performance and the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers and their lecturers in EFL microteaching. This, in turn, is significant for teacher educators since it aims to provide implications for developing their methods of teaching and assessment. It also highlights the importance of pre-service teachers' needs as this will enable teacher educators to know how to satisfy these needs and conduct successful and memorable learning. Finally, it highlights the significant development in pre-service teachers' performance in their practicum and helps prepare highly qualified teachers of English.
- It can open the way towards doing further studies using the interpretive approach which has been totally neglected in Egypt. To my knowledge, no previous studies used an exploratory approach to investigate the role of microteaching in enhancing the teaching performance of Egyptian pre-service teachers of English. It also serves as an example of the triangulation of research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and reflective journals as this combination of research methods has not been widely employed in the Egyptian educational context.
- It helps curriculum designers take into consideration the pre-service teachers' needs and interests in re-designing their curriculum and opens the curriculum planners' and designers' minds to different approaches to the application of microteaching.

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Appendix 1 Pilot Study Semi-structured Interview Schedule

| Semi-structured Interview Schedule | Probes |
|---|---|
| A- EFL Pre-service teachers | |
| Tell me about the experience that you gained during your preparation programme that helps in your teaching practicum? | Teaching skills - management skills - think critically-base instruction on student's needs, interests and abilities - create a safe, respectful, classroom community/achieve educational goals. |
| What was the proportion of theory and practice in your preparation programme? | Theory____ % Practice____% Practical sessions - practicum- microteaching session |
| What are the assessment methods you used in your preparation programme? | Self-assessment - portfolio - feedback |
| How could the programme be improved for newly pre-service teachers? | Reflective practices - more practice - new assessment techniques |
| B- FEL Lecturers | |
| What are the ways pre-service teachers are evaluated during their preparation programmes? | -Test and exam scores -Inspection of pre-servicers' work -Completion of the subject contents -Evaluation by colleagues -Evaluation by school principals at practicum. |
| What are the factors that most influence your teaching? | -Professional training -Academic seminars or workshops -Teaching experience and beliefs -Public exams -Learners' expectations |
| What are the difficulties you face in your teaching in Egypt? | -Testing -Language proficiency -Poor English learning environment -Fewer class hours – Workload |
| What methods does Shebin Elkom College of Education employ in its own training to improve the students' performance and practical skills? | -Microteaching -Material development -Testing and evaluation -Unit, lesson, and syllabus planning -Practicum |
| How could the programme be improved for next year's EFL pre-service teachers? | -Authentic materials -Practical workshops -Work with more experienced teachers -Being observed by others and receiving feedback -Other |

Appendix 2 Informed Consent for Participation in Research



College of Social Sciences and International Studies
Graduate School of Education

I,.....,agree to participate in the research study that is titled “Investigation into the EFL Microteaching Practices of Egyptian Pre-service Teachers of English: Implications for Pre-Service Teacher Curriculum Planning and Design” which is being conducted by Heba Elghotmy, a PhD student at Exeter University. My participation in this study is voluntary and I can stop without any reason or penalty. With no risks are expected and if I agree to participate in this study, I will do the following things: 1) Participate in a questionnaire, audio-taped interview, and /or reflective journal. 2) Review your own interview transcription, known as “member checking” to increase rigor and accuracy of data. 3) The researcher may call me to follow up or clarify information from the interview. Interviews will be conducted in a neutral location or location preferred by the participants.

I understand that efforts to ensure confidentiality will include the use of pseudonyms during interviews and data transcription. I understand that information such as gender, age, and any other type of information will be included in the findings for demographic and participant validity purposes. All documents provided by applicants will be kept in a locked cabinet, accessible only by the researcher. All audio-tapes will be destroyed after a period of time appropriate for data analysis, not to exceed one year. I understand that the researcher will employ peers to review interview transcriptions to validate researcher’s findings. Peers will not have access to any identifiable information. If there are any other questions or concern, please don’t hesitate to contact the researcher at (010)6519892.

Name of the Researcher Name of the Participant

Heba Elghotmy

Appendix 3 Pre-service Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Pre-service teachers,

I am doing my research on microteaching to investigate the focuses of the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education, Menoufia University and to explore the microteaching difficulties that you face during the course. There are a number of questions, grouped into three parts: focuses of microteaching, difficulties of the microteaching course and helpfulness of the course. I would be grateful if you would answer this questionnaire fully. There is no compulsion for you to participate and you may stop your participation at any stage. Any information you will provide will be confidential and for study purposes only. Please don't hesitate to ask me if you have any questions about the research.

Thanks very much in advance for your help and collaboration.

Yours sincerely

Heba Elghotmy

Part one: Focuses of the microteaching course:

This section aims at identifying the focuses of the microteaching course. Would you please put a tick (√) in the box that indicates your opinion.

Key: 5= Always (every session); 4=Often (four sessions a week); 3=Sometimes (two sessions a week); 2= Rarely (one session a week); 1=Never (no session)

How often does your lecturer focus on or deal with each of the following in the microteaching course?

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Oral skills | | | | | |
| 2 | Reading skills | | | | | |
| 3 | New vocabulary | | | | | |
| 4 | Writing skills | | | | | |
| 5 | Grammar | | | | | |
| 6 | Reinforcement (rewards and punishment) | | | | | |
| 7 | Classroom management techniques | | | | | |
| 8 | Set induction (how to begin the lesson) | | | | | |
| 9 | Silence and non-verbal clues (e.g. Eye contact, movements) | | | | | |
| 10 | Writing instructional Objectives | | | | | |
| 11 | Explanation (e.g. illustration and use of examples) | | | | | |
| 12 | Asking questions | | | | | |
| 13 | Lesson closure (how to end the lesson) | | | | | |
| 14 | Stimulus Variation | | | | | |
| 15 | Learning resources (e.g. Audio-Visual Aids) | | | | | |
| 16 | Increasing student participation | | | | | |
| 17 | Providing feedback to individual learners | | | | | |
| 18 | Discussing students' language learning needs | | | | | |
| 19 | Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress | | | | | |
| If you would like to add any other focuses, please do so in the space provided below | | | | | | |

Part two: Difficulties encountered by pre-service teachers in the microteaching course

This section aims at identifying the difficulties you encounter in the microteaching course. Would you please put a tick (√) in the box that best express your opinion.

Key: 5=extremely difficult; 4= Very difficult; 3=somewhat difficult; 2= A little difficult; 1=Not difficult at all

How difficult is each of the following to you in the microteaching course?

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 20 | Finding peers. | | | | | |
| 21 | Accepting your role within the group. | | | | | |
| 22 | Completing assigned tasks on time. | | | | | |
| 23 | Orientation of the teaching skills before practice. | | | | | |
| 24 | Presenting the skills using different ways of demonstration. | | | | | |
| 25 | Planning lesson objectives. | | | | | |
| 26 | Preparing lesson resources. | | | | | |
| 27 | Introducing the lesson in an interesting way. | | | | | |
| 28 | Relating the lesson introduction to the main parts of the lesson smoothly. | | | | | |
| 29 | Checking comprehension. | | | | | |
| 30 | Asking clear questions. | | | | | |
| 31 | Pacing the questions and answers adequately. | | | | | |
| 32 | Prompting techniques to facilitate answers. | | | | | |
| 33 | Looking at the videotape of microteaching. | | | | | |
| 34 | Feedback from the teacher. | | | | | |
| 35 | Feedback from peers. | | | | | |
| 36 | Create reflection regarding the topics covered. | | | | | |
| 37 | Encouraging active participation. | | | | | |
| 38 | Sharing microteaching experiences with others. | | | | | |
| Please add any other difficulties you have in the space provided below | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Part three: Helpfulness of the microteaching course

This part of the questionnaire asks you to respond to the following phrases related to the effectiveness of the microteaching course. Tick (✓) in the box that shows your opinion of the statement.

Key: 5=Strongly agree; 4= Agree; 3=Unsure; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree

The microteaching course helped me develop my skills to:

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 39 | teach learners to collaborate with others. | | | | | |
| 40 | build learners' self-esteem in school. | | | | | |
| 41 | promote learners' well-being. | | | | | |
| 42 | seek advice for students' learning difficulties. | | | | | |
| 43 | communicate in ways that demonstrate respect for others. | | | | | |
| 44 | negotiate effectively with others. | | | | | |
| 45 | seek guidance from colleagues. | | | | | |
| 46 | engage with parents to support students' learning. | | | | | |
| 47 | communicate with other professionals. | | | | | |
| 48 | engage in collaborative teaching. | | | | | |
| 49 | evaluate feedback. | | | | | |
| 50 | enable learners to apply new skills. | | | | | |
| 51 | support learners to manage aspects of their own learning. | | | | | |
| 52 | make effective usage of resources available in environment. | | | | | |
| 53 | set realistic targets for learners. | | | | | |
| 54 | ensure that all class time is used for learning. | | | | | |
| 55 | have secure ELT pedagogical knowledge. | | | | | |
| 56 | plan subject-related targets for learners. | | | | | |
| 57 | answer learners' questions confidently. | | | | | |
| 58 | clarify learners' misconceptions. | | | | | |
| 59 | use various language resources e.g. (dictionaries, grammar books) to check English structure, meanings, and usage. | | | | | |
| 60 | explain the basic functions of language in different situations. | | | | | |
| 61 | Plan considers learners' age and abilities. | | | | | |
| 62 | inform planning with accurate assessments of learners' progress. | | | | | |

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 63 | plan homework to be completed independently, in a reasonable amount of time. | | | | | |
| 64 | relate assessment to intended learning outcomes. | | | | | |
| 65 | assess learners against national performance standards. | | | | | |
| 66 | provide feedback (oral or written) to help learners. | | | | | |
| 67 | give feedback to individual students, groups or whole class. | | | | | |
| 68 | support learners to develop self-assessment skills. | | | | | |
| 69 | help learners to judge their progress towards achieving learning objectives. | | | | | |
| 70 | modify lesson planning in the light of evaluation and assessment. | | | | | |
| 71 | have evidence that the modifications you plan lead to changes in practice. | | | | | |
| 72 | create a meaningful learning environment. | | | | | |
| 73 | recognize the relationship between learners' behavior and lesson involvement. | | | | | |
| 74 | work with colleagues across the school community. | | | | | |
| 75 | ensure that students know acceptable behaviour and their actions' consequences. | | | | | |

Demographic Data

Would you please fill in the following personal details:

Name: (Optional)

E-mail:

Mobile No:

Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix 4 Lecturers' Questionnaire

Dear lecturer,

I am doing my research on microteaching to investigate the focuses of the microteaching course at Shebin Elkom Faculty of Education, Menoufia University and to explore the microteaching difficulties that you face during the course. There are a number of questions, grouped into two parts: focuses of microteaching and difficulties of the microteaching course. I would be grateful if you would answer this questionnaire fully. There is no compulsion for you to participate and you may stop your participation at any stage. Any information you will provide will be confidential and for study purposes only. Please don't hesitate to ask me if you have any questions about the research.

Thanks very much in advance for your help and collaboration.

Yours sincerely

Heba Elghotmy

Part one: Focuses of the microteaching course:

This section aims at identifying the focuses of the microteaching course. Would you please put a tick (√) in the box that indicates your opinion?

Key: 5= Always (every session); 4=Often (four sessions a week); 3=Sometimes (Two sessions a week); 2= Rarely (one session a week); 1=Never (no session)

How often do you focus on or practice the following in the microteaching course?

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Reading skills | | | | | |
| 2 | Writing skills | | | | | |
| 3 | New vocabulary | | | | | |
| 4 | Grammar | | | | | |
| 5 | Oral skills | | | | | |
| 6 | Set induction (how to begin the lesson) | | | | | |
| 7 | Using learning resources (e.g. Audio-Visual Aids) | | | | | |
| 8 | Using silence and non-verbal Clues (e.g. Eye contact, movements) | | | | | |
| 9 | Explanation (e.g. illustration with examples) | | | | | |
| 10 | Writing instructional objectives | | | | | |
| 11 | Asking questions | | | | | |
| 12 | Lesson closure (how to end the lesson) | | | | | |
| 13 | Varying stimulus variation | | | | | |
| 14 | Increasing Students Participation | | | | | |
| 15 | Classroom Management techniques | | | | | |
| 16 | Reinforcement (rewards and punishment) | | | | | |
| 17 | Providing feedback to learners. | | | | | |
| 18 | Discussing students' language learning needs. | | | | | |
| 19 | Collecting evidence to monitor learners' progress | | | | | |
| <p>If you would like to add any other focuses, please do so in the space provided below</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | | | | | | |

Part two: Difficulties encountered by lecturers in the microteaching course

This section aims at identifying the difficulties you encounter in the microteaching course. Would you please put a tick (√) in the box that best express your opinion?

Key: 5=extremely difficult; 4= Very difficult; often; 3=somewhat difficult; 2= A little difficult; 1=Not difficult at all

How difficult is each of the following to you in the microteaching course?

| N | The item | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 20 | Orientation of the teaching skills to be practiced. | | | | | |
| 21 | Presenting the skills using different ways of demonstration. | | | | | |
| 22 | Planning lesson objectives. | | | | | |
| 23 | Preparing lesson resources. | | | | | |
| 24 | Introducing the lesson in an interesting way. | | | | | |
| 25 | Relating the lesson introduction to the main parts of the lesson smoothly. | | | | | |
| 26 | Checking comprehension. | | | | | |
| 27 | Asking clear questions. | | | | | |
| 28 | Pacing the questions and answers adequately. | | | | | |
| 29 | Prompting techniques to facilitate answers. | | | | | |
| 30 | Feedback from the lecturer. | | | | | |
| 31 | Looking at the videotape of microteaching. | | | | | |
| 32 | Feedback from peers. | | | | | |
| 33 | Create reflection regarding the topics covered. | | | | | |
| 34 | Encouraging active participation. | | | | | |
| 35 | Sharing microteaching experiences with others. | | | | | |
| <p>Please add any other difficulties you have in the space provided below</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | | | | | | |

Demographic Data

Would you please fill in the following personal details:

Name: (Optional)

E-mail: Mobile No:

Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix 5 Pre-service teachers' Semi-structured Interview

Dear Pre-service teachers,

I need your participation in the second phase of this research doing an interview. There is no compulsion for you to participate and you can stop at any point and withdraw your participation that will involve describing your perceptions and experiences of the new microteaching course. The interview has been designed to further explore some of the research areas in more depth to get your spontaneous views and perceptions about the focuses, difficulties and effectiveness of the new course. I'd like to remind you that your confidentiality is a major concern and that any information you provide will be only used for the research purposes and will be treated as confidential. Thank you in advance for helping us with this research which will ultimately improve the quality of the microteaching course offered to EFL prospective teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Heba Elghotmy

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

At the beginning, the interviewee will be informed about the aim of the investigation and will be assured that the recorded interview data will be used for research purposes only.

| Areas to Explore | Semi-structured interview likely questions |
|--|--|
| Pre-microteaching course expectations | 1. What did you expect to practice during the new microteaching course? |
| The microteaching cycle | 2. Tell me about the steps you went through when you were practicing a new skill in the microteaching lesson? What sources had been used? |
| Feedback and reflection | 3. You received feedback from different people (lecturer, peers) and different sources (video, feedback, reflection) about your teaching, how open were you for feedback? 4. Was it easy for you to accept negative feedback (criticism)? 5. How do you like to receive feedback and why? 6. Describe the content and quality of the feedback you received from your lecturer (strengths, suggestions for improvement, comments) and how it improved your own teaching. 7. What other areas would you like to receive feedback on (planning, management, pacing, techniques, strategies, etc.)? Why? |
| Video-taping | 8. What did you feel about being video-taped? 9. How did you feel about your teaching after viewing the video? 10. What did you learn about your teaching from replaying the video that you were not aware of before? Did the video help you see aspects of your teaching that you were not aware of? Which? |
| Practicum | 11. What have you learned so far that was of significant to help you succeed in your practicum? 12. Which have been the most important changes you have seen in your teaching?(Strengths, suggestions for improvement, comments) and how has it impacted on your own teaching or affected your ideas (beliefs) about teaching? |
| Attitude towards the new course | 13. What do you feel about the new course? And has your attitude towards teaching changed after the microteaching experience? In what ways? |

Appendix 6 Lecturers' Semi-structured Interview

Dear Lecturer,

I need your participation in the second phase of this research doing an interview. There is no compulsion for you to participate and you can stop at any point and withdraw your participation that will involve describing your perceptions and experiences of the new microteaching course. The interview has been designed to further explore some of the research areas in more depth to get your spontaneous views and perceptions about the focuses, difficulties and effectiveness of the new course. I'd like to remind you that your confidentiality is a major concern and that any information you provide will be only used for the research purposes and will be treated as confidential. Thank you in advance for helping us with this research which will ultimately improve the quality of the microteaching course offered to EFL pre-service teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Heba Elghotmy

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

At the beginning, the interviewee will be informed about the aim of the investigation and will be assured that the recorded interview data will be used for research purposes only.

| Areas to Explore | Semi-structured interview likely questions |
|--|--|
| Microteaching course focuses | 1. What did you expect to focus on during the new microteaching course? |
| The microteaching phases | 2. Tell me about the steps you went through when you were practicing a new skill in the microteaching lesson? What resources did you use? 3. What do you think was the most difficult phase? Why? |
| Assessment Feedback, and reflection | 4. Tell me about the course assessment criteria? 5. Did you make evaluation criteria clear to pre-service teachers at the beginning of the course? 6. What do you think the purpose of the feedback is? 7. Describe the content and quality of the feedback you gave to pre-service teachers (strengths, suggestions for improvement, comments) and how it improved the teaching/ learning process. 8. Did you establish a keeping record system for the evaluation sheets, reflection, and feedback? How? |
| Video-taping | 9. Tell me how did the process of video-taping take place during the microteaching lessons? 10. What suggestions could you give to ensure effective usage of video-taping? |
| Practicum | 11. In your opinion, was it helpful for the pre-service teachers to have the course in their second year preparation programme or simultaneously with their student teaching in their third year of preparation? |
| Attitude towards the new course | 12. Do you like working in this course? 13. Has pre-service teachers' attitude towards teaching changed after the microteaching experience? In what ways? |

Appendix 7 Pre-service teachers' reflective journal

Dear Pre-service teacher,

The reflective journal has been designed to help you think deeply about your personal perceptions and experiences of the microteaching course. You will be asked to: (a) narrate what you expect about the microteaching course before its application; (b) think about the microteaching course after it has been applied; (c) think and write about what you would do differently if you were to have the course again. And finally, (d) clarify the knowledge and skills you have learned from the microteaching course and your suggestion for improving the course.

Following your microteaching course, take 15-30 minutes to sit peacefully and reflect upon your microteaching experience in a learning journal. You are encouraged to take some personal time to reflect on the experience. Feel free to write your comments about the course and you can also add any materials or documents to support your writing. The journal can be written in either Arabic or English and no worries about spelling, grammar or punctuation, because the research is exploring perceptions, thoughts and experiences.

There are no known risks to you from being involved in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and your welfare is a major concern. The possible benefit of your participation is a better understanding of the new course application which could be helpful for EFL pre-service teachers' preparation programme in the future.

Thanks for your help and cooperation

The Researcher

About Me

Name:

Gender.....

Email address:

Mobile.....

About my microteaching course

What did I expect the focuses of the microteaching course to be?

.....
.....
.....

What were the current focuses of the microteaching course?

.....
.....
.....

Are there any specific skills that I would like the lecturer to focus more on?

.....
.....
.....

How did I feel about the focuses of the microteaching course?

.....
.....
.....

What aspects caused me the most difficulty?

.....
.....
.....

What aspects caused me the most anxiety?

.....
.....
.....

What were the most helpful skills I took away from the microteaching course?

.....
.....
.....

Which points would I use in my own teaching based on my learning to teach experience?

.....
.....
.....

What were my strengths in practicum? How can I build upon them?

.....
.....
.....

Were there any aspects that surprised me about the course?

.....
.....
.....

What are some specific areas for improvement?

.....
.....
.....

What different things would I do if I had the opportunity to participate in the course again?

.....
.....
.....

In my point of view, how will the information collected from my reflective journal affect future application of the microteaching course?

.....
.....
.....

**Thanks for your contribution
The Researcher**

Appendix 8 Part of a Sample of Coded Interview Transcript

- 1 **What is the content of the new microteaching course? Or the skills**
2 **addressed?**
- 3 The microteaching course begins in the second year where students are
4 equated with the theoretical components of the microteaching course. In the
5 first semester, they should know what microteaching is, what its origin is, its
6 importance. This helps them have a conceptual framework on this course.
- 7 There are many skills pre-service teachers should master before being licensed [F]
8 to teach. These skills are presented in the course to be consistent with the
9 lesson stages. Under these broad skills come some other sub skills that pre-
10 service teachers should be trained on how to micro-teach these sub-skills. [F]
11 **What are these sub teaching skills you focus on during the**
12 **microteaching sessions?**
- 13 One of the teaching skills I focused on in the course is having definite clear
14 and specific objectives for each lesson as it assists pre-service teachers to [FO-PS-WIO]
15 perform effective teaching and it helps them to know exactly what he will do
16 and how to do it especially when we teach a foreign language. I trained pre- [FO-PS]
17 service teachers to follow some steps when writing objectives such as
18 defining the goals of the Second year prep school course and to transform the [FO-PS-WIO]
19 general statements of the course aims into procedural statements of
20 objectives. Designing associated lesson resources for certain learning [EQ-PS-PLS]
21 objectives is very crucial point in lesson planning too. The pre-service
22 teacher has to draw the attention of the learners, prepare their minds and
23 motivate them to receive the new knowledge. I also, trained pre-service [FO-IMP-PS-CP-SV]
24 teachers to use the socialized review where one learner has to ask a question
25 and another responds, the one who responds correctly asks the next question
26 which has to be answered by a third learner to smoothly start the lesson. [EQ-IMP-LIS-SI]
- 27 **How about the four language skills and how they were practiced in the**
28 **course?**
- 29 Umm....Yes, in the course we focus on the lesson content or the material to be [FO-IMP-PS-ELT]
30 taught and how it is to be taught. To teach the content pre-service teachers
31 have to present for example the new vocabulary items and structure. The aim [FO-IMP-PS-CP]
32 of teaching EFL listening especially in the preparatory stage is to develop
33 learners' ability to listen to understand, and communicate in the foreign [FO-IMP-PS-ELT-O]
34 language. In microteaching sessions, As a result of this view of listening as a
35 basis for comprehension and communication, the pre-service teachers were
36 trained to teach listening skills through situations. Also, pupils should have
37 the chance to make a conversation and have a free role play in which they
38 practice role-play in different situations. Questioning also was practiced in
39 the course by training pre-service teachers on using both display questions to [FO-IMP-PS-CP-AQ]
40 test pupils' understanding and knowledge while and referential questions
41 that are mainly to making pupils think about the answer.
- 42 **What type of skills you focused on regarding assessment and**
43 **evaluation?**
- 44 How to end the lesson or assignment is that part of the lesson that tells [FO-EV-LC]
45 learners what to do after school hours and is related to what is already done
46 or what is still to be done in class. It takes the form of questions to be
47 answered, or a review of past lessons. Assignments may be given to
48 individual learners as a follow-up activity to what has already been made in
49 the classroom.
- 50 **Tell me about the steps you went through when you were practicing a**

51 **new skill in the microteaching session with your pre-service teachers?**
52 **And what sources did you use?**
53 I started by dividing pre-service teachers into their groups, then I show them [CH-PRA-PGW]
54 how to do the skills, through verbal explanation of that skill with pre-service [CH-PRA-M]
55 teachers. I also, gave them some written examples of the skills that will be [CH-INT-PL]
56 practiced in the session. Then, pre-service teachers involves in multiple
57 activities such as planning and teaching their micro-lesson. In designing and [CH-INT-TC]
58 preparing a micro-lesson, pre-service teacher now has the chance to practice
59 the teaching skill by planning a micro-lesson. The pre-service teacher [CH-PRA-PGW]
60 prepares the lesson with his peers and my approval as well. As micro
61 lesson's success is greatly affected by lesson planning, I have not found any
62 challenge related to lesson planning skills as we from the course beginning, [CH-INT-PL]
63 tried to focus on training pre-service teachers on such a skill. Finally,
64 feedback is provided to the pre-service teachers about their lesson from [CH-POA-CS]
65 their peers and from my comments.

66 **What do you think was the most difficult step? Why?**
67 The most difficult part is pre-service teachers teaching for their peers where [CH-PRA-PGW]
68 some pre-service teachers made it difficult for the lecturer by misbehaving, [CH-POA-CS]
69 Second, giving and receiving feedback. Honestly, there are other problems
70 such as pre-service teachers' big numbers, inadequate halls and equipments, [ETH-SIT-INS-PR-CS]
71 and time constraints. I also think that these microteaching problems are not
72 only confined to the faculty or lecturers, but it is more of a society issue than
73 anything else. As Egyptians, the society which we live in doesn't permit [CIS-SIT-INS-FLE]
74 discussing ideas, or expressing opinions. [CIC-SIT-SP-ER]

75 **Did pre-service teachers have some preliminary or introductory**
76 **sessions about the new course; its content, its evaluation criteria, and**
77 **its components; such as, feedback, video-taping, and reflection?**
78 The first two sessions of the course were mainly theoretical about [CIC-INF-LCT]
79 microteaching, its origins, its components, its phases and the different
80 teaching skills we are going to practice during the course but we did not have
81 any time to acquaint pre-service teachers of peer group work, feedback or
82 reflection as this needs a whole term because EFL pre-service teachers join [CIC-PSY-PEB]
83 their preparation programs with certain beliefs, about teaching and learning
84 from their pre-university schools that affected their way of interaction with
85 their lecturers and their peers during course activities. For example, at the [ETH-SIT-INS-PR-CS]
86 pre-university level, no time for reflection is given for pupils. The class has
87 about 70 pupils that they can even sit appropriately in a suitable desk. I don't
88 think this situation is suitable for reflection. Even in the private school which
89 has 30 pupils in the class. Teachers don't care about reflection they care [CIC-SIT-SC]
90 about giving private teaching sessions outside the school for extra money to
91 cover their living expenses. If you know that the teachers' salary from the [CIC-SIT-SP]
92 government is about 90 dollars monthly, you can imagine why is doing so.

93 **Did you make different kinds of feedback (oral/ written/ self/ peers, or**
94 **lecturers) clear to pre-service teachers at the beginning of the**
95 **sessions?**
96 What I did is that I advised my pre-service teachers to be focused and not too [CIC-INF]
97 general. Thus, instead of saying to the pre-service teacher that he was not clear
98 in his explanations, we have to tell him exactly where he was not clear and [CH-POA-CS]
99 describe why we had trouble understanding him as the best way to give
100 feedback is to identify a small number of things the person did effectively in

| | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| 101 | <u>addition to a few things on which he or she can improve, so think about what is</u> | CH-POA-CS |
| 102 | <u>best to focus on for each pre-service teacher.</u> | |
| 103 | What do you think the purpose of the feedback is? | |
| 104 | Feedback is an important component in the microteaching course. <u>It gives</u> | CH-POA-CS |
| 105 | <u>pre-service teachers information about their efforts to master a particular</u> | |
| 106 | <u>teaching skill to improve themselves.</u> The sources of feedback in the | |
| 107 | microteaching situation in the present course are: a video record of the | |
| 108 | micro-lesson; the pre-service teacher himself, then, his fellow peers and the | |
| 109 | lecturer. Each individual present writes down his comments regarding the | |
| 110 | micro-lesson that was recorded and replayed. Finally, feedback is provided, | |
| 111 | first by the pre-service teacher fellow peers, then by the lecturer. | |
| 112 | From your point of view how can we help pre-service teachers when | |
| 113 | giving feedback to their peers? | |
| 114 | <u>I suggest preparing feedback forms that consist of questions which the pre-</u> | CH-POA-CS |
| 115 | <u>service teacher that were observing filled in immediately after one of their</u> | |
| 116 | <u>classmates finished doing a microteaching session.</u> These forms can be filled | |
| 117 | in many times for each pre-service teacher depending on <u>how many pre-</u> | CIC-SIT-SC |
| 118 | <u>service teachers were presenting.</u> This written statement aimed to help pre- | |
| 119 | service teacher see how clearly they carried out the goals of the lesson to their | |
| 120 | peers. | |
| 121 | Describe the content and quality of the feedback you gave to pre-service | |
| 122 | teachers (strengths, suggestions for improvement, comments) and how | |
| 123 | it improved the teaching/ learning process. | |
| 124 | <u>The feedback I gave to my pre-service teachers was mainly verbal because of</u> | CH-POA-CS |
| 125 | <u>the pre-service teachers' big number and session's time is not enough to give</u> | |
| 126 | <u>written feedback needs for about 10 pre-service teachers in the group.</u> What | CIC-SIT-SC |
| 127 | we want is that the pre-service teacher can benefit from peer feedback. In | |
| 128 | this respect, they have to be careful with the words they use when giving | |
| 129 | feedback to their peers. Words such as 'weak', 'poor' can cause breakdown in | |
| 130 | the communication inside the microteaching classroom. Even positive words | |
| 131 | such as 'excellent' and 'very good' need to be used carefully and followed by | |
| 132 | the reasons of giving that feedback. | |
| 133 | Did you establish a keeping record system for the evaluation sheets, | |
| 134 | reflection, and feedback? How? | |
| 135 | <u>No, I did not use that but we think that we should have this done next years.</u> | [CH-POA] |
| 136 | <u>In this course,</u> reflection is a process demanding frequent questioning of pre- | |
| 137 | service teachers' own aims and actions and continuous monitoring of their | |
| 138 | practice and outcomes in order to make sound decisions and to take action | |
| 139 | that will develop their skills to help their pupils learn better. | |
| 140 | Tell me how did the process of video-taping take place during the | |
| 141 | microteaching sessions? | |
| 142 | The purpose of having the microteaching sessions videotaped is <u>not to</u> | CH-POA-CS |
| 143 | <u>evaluate pre-service teachers but rather to help them improve on their</u> | |
| 144 | <u>instruction. After the pre-service teacher prepared and presented a micro</u> | [CH-POA] |
| 145 | <u>lesson on the teaching skill of concern to their peers on topics of second year</u> | |
| 146 | <u>preparatory school English curriculum. The video is later reviewed to</u> | |
| 147 | identify strength and areas for improvement, then, the pre-service teachers | |
| 148 | receive feedback from peers and from the lecturer. A digital camera was used | |
| 149 | to video-tape the micro-lesson in the current microteaching course because a | |
| 150 | fixed one was not available. | |

151 **What suggestions could you give to ensure effective usage of video-**
152 **taping?**

153 It seems advisable to have someone model the kind of questions pre-service
154 teachers should ask themselves and the types of actions and behavior they
155 might need to pay attention to when observing their video replays. This could
156 help create awareness of their actions and aid them in the reflection process.

CH-POA-CS

157 Some pre-service teachers had watched the video alone before the session and
158 they informed me that they had not been aware of many aspects of their
159 teaching when they were watching it by themselves. However, when they
160 watched the video with me many details become evident just by the action
161 that I exerted of stopping the video recording at regular intervals of time and
162 asking them to comment or express what they had noticed. The stopping
163 action had triggered in them the notion that something important was
164 happening and made them look more carefully into the scene arousing their
165 interest and making them reflect more profoundly.

166 **In your opinion, was it helpful for the pre-service teachers to have the**
167 **course in as part of their preparation program?**

168 It is necessary to prepare students for their practicum before going to prep
169 schools to practice teaching EFL that is why it is necessary to help them to
170 benefit from such a course. What I suggest is to have the course in year three
171 as well as year two to be more helpful for them when they start practicum
172 but it needs to be changed in the college bylaw. Having the course in year
173 three could help facilitate inviting supervisors to the college and mentors to
174 the school during practicum to improve their mutual relationship for the sake
175 of pre-service teachers.

[E]

176 **Did you like working in this course?**

177 I enjoyed working in the course but more things need to be taken into
178 consideration for next years as special training workshops should be
179 arranged for both pre-service teachers and lecturers to acquaint them with
180 the different phases and components of the course for the aim of practicing
181 giving and receiving different kinds of feedback and reflective practices.

[CH-PRA-ATM]

[CIC-INF]

Appendix 9 Part of a Sample of Coded Reflective Journal Transcript

| | | |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1 | What did I expect the focuses of the microteaching course to be? | |
| 2 | I expected to practise how to be use different ways to evaluate my pupils. I | [F-EV] |
| 3 | expected also to practise how to deal with learners' different styles in | |
| 4 | different situations as some pupils might learn best through visual stimuli | F-IMP-PS-CP-SV |
| 5 | while others might learn best by listening. A third group of pupils learn best | |
| 6 | by drawing a picture or doing an action. Every pupil is different from the | [E-PA-R] |
| 7 | other. | |
| 8 | What were the current focuses of the microteaching course? | |
| 9 | I practised writing lesson objectives and preparing aids that are important | [F-PS-WIO] |
| 10 | as they help us as to present new vocabulary and grammatical structures | |
| 11 | more clearly, interest the learners, develop their motivation, and help our | [R-PS-PLS] |
| 12 | pupils understand better and develop positive attitudes towards EFL | |
| 13 | learning. I also, practised how to start the lesson in an interesting way | [F-IMP-PS-ELT] |
| 14 | especially that Egyptian pupils lack the motivation to participate actively in | |
| 15 | classroom activities because of their concern of passing the examinations to | [R-IMP-LIS-S] |
| 16 | get a high mark which focus on memorization rather than enjoying learning. | |
| 17 | During the microteaching course I knew some practical techniques about | [CIC-PSY-LM] |
| 18 | how to make learning fun. I know it is a big challenge in Egypt but it is worth | |
| 19 | trying. | |
| 20 | Are there any specific skills that I would like the lecturer to focus more | |
| 21 | on? | |
| 22 | I'd like the course to focus more on communicating learning objectives | [F-PS-WIO] |
| 23 | to my pupils. I feel that there is a missing gap between witting the | |
| 24 | objectives and sharing these objectives with them. The point is that | |
| 25 | when pupils feel that their opinions are valuable, they will love the class and | |
| 26 | they will be waiting for the teacher to come, but when their opinions are | |
| 27 | ignored or not respected, they won't participate actively in the classroom and | [CIC-SIT-SP-ER] |
| 28 | even will not like to go to school again. Also, I hope I could know more about | |
| 29 | the criteria for assessing portfolios and how it shows the pupils' work and | [FO-EV-CM] |
| 30 | involvement in classroom activities. What I honestly still need to practice | |
| 31 | more is the way English' usage should be clear in their portfolio such as | |
| 32 | grammatical and vocabulary correctness. Also, how can I or my pupils select | |
| 33 | some of their work for their portfolio? I will feel more confident in my own | |
| 34 | abilities, if I will have the chance to design lesson learning resources that are | [RQ-PS-PLS] |
| 35 | suitable to my pupils. Also, I think it will be better to cooperate with my peers | |
| 36 | and even my pupils to design the learning resources for the lessons we will | |
| 37 | teach. | |
| 38 | How did I feel about the focuses of the microteaching course? | |
| 39 | The information is developing, and for us, it's changeable. What is taught | |
| 40 | today is not taught in the future. If I don't update myself, I will not be able to | |
| 41 | teach well. Also, I must be aware of what is going around me. As a foreign | [F-IMP-PS-ELT] |
| 42 | language teacher, I must be capable of using EFL in meaningful and different | |
| 43 | situations. I felt disappointed about assessing pupils, monitoring their | |
| 44 | progress or giving them feedback or even plan my lesson on their needs not | [F-EV] |
| 45 | only on the curriculum content. Those skills were mainly theoretical and not | |
| 46 | practised in the course. I also feel confused between what I have been | |
| 47 | practised in the course and what my supervisor in the school advised me to | [ETH-SIT-INS-PR-S] |
| 48 | do in practicum. The problem is the supervisors' opinions are in many | |

49 situations different from our lecturers' one. For example, we learnt in the [F-PS]
50 microteaching course lesson planning steps and when we use them in
51 practicum, the supervisors asked us to change it saying that we have to use [ETH-SIT-INS-PR-5]
52 his steps as it is much related to what is prescribed in the government
53 teachers' guide.

54 **What aspects caused me the most difficulty?**

55 Giving and receiving feedback was the most difficult point in the course for [CH-POA-CS]
56 me. Most of the times, I felt that my ideas were too narrow and my mind is
57 empty and I did not know what to say anything. It was done orally after [CIC-INF-LCT]
58 replaying the video of my teaching and I also listened to my peers' feedback
59 about my teaching. Maybe, I don't know, it was not easy task to give your
60 feedback. It was a new task for me and I did not learn before how to do that.
61 Also, I did not see the point from giving feedback to your peer as I expected
62 the lecture's feedback to be the most useful due to the lectures' expertise. I
63 expected the lecturer at the beginning of the course to provide a practice
64 session on how feedback should be provided and the type of feedback peers
65 should submit. Another difficult thing in the course is to teach to my peers. It
66 was a new situation not only for me but for many pre-service teachers. In
67 Egypt, as you know, we are accustomed to listening to lecturers and not
68 working in groups. Then, suddenly, you came to ask me to teach for my peers. [CIC-SIT-SC-CL]
69 It is really difficult. In some situations, I felt like an artist in a play and I
70 encounter some difficulties to teach to my peers as if they are pupils. Also, I [CIC-SIT-SC]
71 was reluctant to criticize them. I think it could be easy if we micro-teach with
72 real pupils.

73 **What aspect caused me the most anxiety?**

74 First, honestly, I did not feel comfortable receiving feedback as sometimes the [CIC-PSY-MA]
75 feedback is critical and may be harmful and this makes me feel frustrated.
76 What I really would like to learn is how to accept criticism and try learn from
77 it and apply it in my practicum. Also, fearing to fail before my peers was [CIC-PSY-MA]
78 annoying me and made me hesitated about the idea of giving feedback or
79 being criticized by my peer. However, I cannot ignore its usefulness to
80 improve my teaching and know the importance of feedback. Peer feedback is
81 highly important as we are teaching English as a foreign language, and if I am [CH-PRA-PGW]
82 a good teacher, I have to listen to other colleagues' points of view. The second
83 requirement is reflection. I did not expect much from self-reflection or video
84 watching as it was strange and difficult to seeing yourself on the video. It was
85 totally new for me. I have not been learnt how to reflect on similar tasks
86 before. It was the first time to hear such a concept in the faculty. I need to [CIC-INF-LCT]
87 know how to do this and to be trained on it before the beginning of the
88 course. It is totally new, I found the reflective journal which we used in this
89 study a good idea to express my opinions especially for me as I prefer to
90 express my ideas in writing. Also, it helps me to focus my thoughts towards
91 reflection. I wish all of us can use it during the microteaching course.

92 **What were the most helpful skills I took away from the microteaching**
93 **course?**

94 I used to think of teaching like something intuition. Something that might [CIC-PSY-PEB]
95 come out in the course of teaching and you just take it. Now when I started
96 this course I realized that everything in teaching should be planned for. It is

| | | |
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| 97 | exhaustive process for the teacher and it was not that easy as I thought. I find | |
| 98 | it useful to <u>learn new ways of teaching vocabulary</u> . But, when I began my | [F-IMP-PS-ELT-V] |
| 99 | practicum, I found most in not <u>all in-service teachers believe that vocabulary</u> | |
| 100 | <u>is developed when learners are required to memorize word list and look up</u> | [CIC-SIT-SP-ES] |
| 101 | <u>new words in the dictionary. This activity is meaningless and results in</u> | |
| 102 | <u>passive learning and quick forgetting. The more studying lists of words you</u> | |
| 103 | <u>memorize before exams, the higher the scores you will have. That is why</u> | |
| 104 | learners are not motivated to participate and see learning vocabulary a must | |
| 105 | and a hard work. | |
| 106 | Which points would I use in my own teaching based on my learning to | |
| 107 | teach experience? | |
| 108 | <u>What I really benefited from and found it new and would like to use is</u> | [E] |
| 109 | <u>corrective feedback</u> as sometimes you don't want to be disappointed by | |
| 110 | saying 'wrong' to pupils but using this kind of feedback gives you the chance | |
| 111 | to praise the pupils when they have wrong answers by saying for example | |
| 112 | nice work or try again. I like this kind of <u>reinforcement</u> instead of the negative | [F-IMP-PS-CP-R] |
| 113 | reinforcement where the teacher tell the pupil that his answer is wrong or | |
| 114 | that he will not be able to give a correct answer. This behaviour discourages | |
| 115 | pupils' participation for fear of giving wrong answers. I like <u>referential</u> | [F-IMP-PS-CP-AQ] |
| 116 | <u>questions</u> as they create lovely interaction climate in the classroom as pupils' | |
| 117 | have to think hard to find the answers which are not found in their books. | |
| 118 | Also, I can't say that these answers are right or wrong so I can hear different | |
| 119 | ideas and opinions. | |
| 120 | What were my strengths in practicum? How can I build upon them? | |
| 121 | In practicum, <u>it was really good to start my lesson and keep my pupils</u> | [E-PS-TM] |
| 122 | <u>interested</u> . In the session, I greeted the class with good morning everyone or hi | |
| 123 | everyone, then, taking about attendance and who is absent today and what is | |
| 124 | wrong with him. Second, I tried to get everyone's attention using simple | |
| 125 | sentences such as listen to me please, or can I have your attention please. | |
| 126 | Finally, I used oral questions to test pupils' previous knowledge about the new | |
| 127 | lesson. This way helps the process of questioning to succeed, <u>an atmosphere</u> | [E-PS-LE] |
| 128 | <u>of trust inside the classroom should prevail as when pupils feel that the goal</u> | |
| 129 | <u>of my questions is to search for answers not to pick who cannot give correct</u> | |
| 130 | <u>answers</u> will like questions and they really will try to use their minds. The | |
| 131 | style of teaching <u>I like in grammar and would like to keep using it is that</u> | [E-PKU-CSM] |
| 132 | <u>based on comprehension</u> . I need my learners to understand the grammar. I | |
| 133 | don't want them to memorize in their minds, and once they are outside of the | |
| 134 | class, they don't remember anything. In teaching grammar, I always try to | |
| 135 | introduce the structure through the context. I let them read the examples | |
| 136 | which contain many present tense expressions. What I also, would like to | |
| 137 | build on is keeping pupils' attention as in <u>the Egyptian classroom teachers tend</u> | [CIC-SIT-SP-ER] |
| 138 | <u>to speak too much</u> and this leads pupils to feel bored. | |
| 139 | Were there any aspects that surprised me about the course? | |
| 140 | <u>At the beginning of the microteaching course, honestly I had a negative</u> | [CH-PRA-ATM] |
| 141 | <u>attitude towards the course as I felt it will be just a theoretical course added</u> | |
| 142 | <u>to our burdens as pre-service teachers like most if not all the course which we</u> | [CIC-PSY-LM] |
| 143 | <u>have in the English department. I did not have any idea about what the course</u> | |
| 144 | <u>will be about and what is meant to micro-teach. What made me surprised also</u> | [CIC-INF-LCT] |

145 in the course was the non-natural classroom environments as most of our [CIS-SIT-INS-FLE]
146 micro-sessions were based on a theatre like rooms which did not give us the
147 chance to practice in a same class like environment. Also, when we were
148 preparing our lesson resources, material production procedures were limited [E-PS-PLS]
149 to restricted funds and sometimes no funds at all. English has to be taught
150 using computer, CD, intelligent board because I need to show my learners'
151 some pictures, sounds, examples, so I can benefit from the new technology to
152 achieve stimulus variation in class. An issue which is missing in most [CIC-SIT-INS]
153 Egyptian classrooms which are not equipped with even a projector. Moreover,
154 there were time limited course schedules that did not give me time to reteach
155 after feedback.

156 **What are some specific areas for improvement?**

157 In lesson planning, teachers need to be sure that assessment includes the [F-EV]
158 learning needs of all pupils which even after the microteaching training I did
159 not know how to practically execute these practices with my pupils such as [PD-EV-DN]
160 giving feedback, or discuss pupils' needs either the pupils themselves or with
161 their parents. From my point of view, I see that it is better to give pupils
162 positive feedback as we should tell learners what is good, what they are doing
163 really well, and what they need to improve and how to help weaker or less
164 confident pupils. What we learnt in the course about giving feedback to [F-EV-FI]
165 individual learners was mainly theoretical. We did not practice giving
166 feedback to individual learners in our microteaching lessons. The feedback I [CH-POA-CS]
167 received focused mostly with classroom management and it would be very
168 useful to have feedback about how to improve my teaching, like using new
169 teaching techniques to help improve my teaching style. Dealing with students
170 is the real practice. As you know, in the classroom, you find here in Egypt
171 different levels, mixed ability classes, so this is a great problem that we all
172 face that needs much thinking how to match large classes with different
173 abilities, so we always think of new ways, alternative ways to deal with such [E-SIT-INS-PR-CS]
174 great number with different levels. For example, for me, I feel difficulty to deal
175 with every student in a class of fifty. Video can also be used, for skills [CH-PRA-M]
176 demonstrations or modelling prior to teaching. I wish I had been prepared for
177 video watching or video critique before the course began. May be two or [CIC-INF-LCT]
178 three sessions to introduce this new technique would help us to understand
179 what will happen in the course. I feel it is real important but not used well.
180 Honestly, I was not prepared whether mentally or emotionally for 'video' in [CIC-PSY-MA]
181 the micro-teaching course.

182 **What different things would I do if I had the opportunity to participate**
183 **in the course again?**

184 I don't like the way I started microteaching because it seems that I did not
185 pay much attention to take a look at everyone and say my instructions
186 clearly. I really took it for granted, you know, I thought it was much of a
187 theory, you know, pure theory. But, when I sat here and I watched the video
188 and listened to the first one and the second one I thought to myself oh, I did
189 not know many things about my performance in the classroom, It was really
190 an eye opener to some aspects that you really don't care simply because I am
191 giving the whole attention to the activities and not to the human beings or
192 learners in the classroom. It was great to see my progress from the first

193 micro-lesson to the last one. I cannot believe the improvements, I have made. (E)
194 The overall microteaching experience was a good one. It made me realize
195 that if I work at something hard enough, I can improve to where I want to be.
196 The only things I would have done differently would be to prepare [CIC-PSY-MA]
197 more and relax...If I would have done these things, I am sure this would have
198 been my best micro-lesson ever.
199 **In my point of view, how will the information collected from my**
200 **reflective journal affect future application of the microteaching course?**
201 What is next? What is after reflection? I don't think our lecturers will read our [CIC-SIT-SP-ER]
202 ideas and use it. Who cares? The other thing is that preparing pupils for
203 examinations is the final outcome of work in Egyptian education. Pupils have [CIC-SIT-SP-ES]
204 to get an excellent mark to be able to join the faculty and that is it. May be
205 after the Egyptian revolution something changes. I am waiting.