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## Inner Speech Experiences of Pre-service EFL Teachers During Courses and Teaching Practicum

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### Abstract

This qualitative case study examines the inner speech experiences of pre-service EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers during their courses in L2 (second/foreign language) and teaching practicum. Inner speech diaries maintained by twelve Turkish pre-service teachers of English over a four-week period captured the participants' private reflections on various aspects of their learning and teaching processes, including task management, emotional regulation, and professional observations. The findings revealed six prominent themes during the coursework phase: task-related concerns, irrelevant thoughts, well-being, classroom dynamics, emotional responses, and perceptions of teacher quality. Similarly, six themes emerged during the teaching practicum: irrelevant thoughts, student characteristics, mentoring quality, teaching skills, well-being, and future aspirations. Notably, some themes, such as well-being and irrelevant thoughts, were consistent across both contexts, reflecting shared challenges like anxiety, distraction, and emotional fatigue. Themes specific to the practicum highlighted the participants' growing awareness of classroom dynamics and professional responsibilities. This research contributes to the limited body of literature on inner speech in second language acquisition by emphasizing its dual role as both a cognitive aid and a mirror to the learner's emotional and situational contexts.

**Keywords:** Inner speech, learner psychology, second language acquisition, sociocultural theory

### İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Dersler ve Öğretmenlik Uygulaması Sırasındaki İç Konuşma Deneyimleri

#### Özet

Bu nitel durum çalışması, İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının L2 (ikinci/yabancı dil) dersleri ve öğretmenlik uygulaması sırasındaki iç konuşma deneyimlerini incelemektedir. On iki Türk İngilizce öğretmen adayı tarafından dört hafta boyunca tutulan iç konuşma günlükleri, görev yönetimi, duygusal düzenleme ve mesleki gözlemler gibi katılımcıların öğrenme ve öğretme süreçlerine dair özel düşüncelerini kaydetmiştir. Ders aşamasında elde edilen bulgular göreve ilişkin endişeler, alakasız düşünceler, iyi oluş, sınıf dinamikleri, duygusal tepkiler ve öğretmen niteliğine dair algılar olmak üzere altı tema ortaya çıkarmıştır. Benzer şekilde, öğretmenlik uygulaması aşamasında ise şu altı tema belirlenmiştir: alakasız düşünceler, öğrenci özellikleri, mentörlük kalitesi, öğretim becerileri, iyi oluş ve geleceğe yönelik beklentiler. İyi oluş ve alakasız düşünceler gibi bazı temaların her iki bağlamda da tutarlılık göstererek kaygı, dikkat dağınıklığı ve duygusal yorgunluk gibi ortak zorlukları yansıttığı dikkat çekmiştir. Uygulamaya özgü temalar, katılımcıların sınıf dinamikleri ve mesleki sorumluluklar konusundaki artan farkındalığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu araştırma, iç konuşmanın hem

bilişsel bir araç hem de öğrenenin duygusal ve durumsal bağlamlarını yansıtan bir ayna olarak çift rolünü vurgulayarak, ikinci dil ediniminde iç konuşma üzerine sınırlı alanyazına katkı sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** İç konuşma; öğrenen psikolojisi; ikinci dil edinimi; sosyokültürel teori

## 1. Introduction

Inner speech is the internal dialogue that happens within an individual's mind without being vocalized. It differs significantly from everyday speech since it is entirely private and can persist for as long as the individual desires, regardless of time, place, or subject. Inner speech, as the name suggests, is the individual sharing his inner world with himself; therefore, it can be in as many different forms and can be used in as many different purposes (e.g. to remember crucial information, to make comments or evaluations about any subject, to make plans or to self-motivate). The introduction of inner speech to world literature dates back to Vygotsky. In his book "Thoughts and Language," Vygotsky defined inner speech as developing the capacity to "think words" (1986, p.230). The Vygotskian sociocultural theory offers a basis for understanding inner speech and language development. According to Vygotsky (1986), egocentric speech evolves into inner speech as children grow. This process is crucial from a sociocultural perspective, shaping the human brain from childhood to adulthood by storing significant social and cultural information that influences the development of the mind and character. McCarthy and McCarthy (2001) also refer to an inner voice that expresses our fathomless and requisite selves as they state 'everyone has an inner voice, and we can all learn to listen to it' (p. 371). de Guerrero (2012) argues that, although often associated with quiet self-talk, inner speech is much more comprehensive and vital than inner self-talk. She elaborates that the capacity for inner speech is developed through social interactions and serves as a mechanism for verbal or symbolic thinking. Additionally, Fernyhough (2011) argues that although our minds are essentially introverts, we are social within ourselves because our conscious mind has an internal language.

Inner speech serves as a silent but powerful cognitive tool that facilitates language development and acquisition as it contributes to various aspects of language learning, including comprehension, memorization, and the internalization of grammatical structures (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015; de Guerrero, 2004). de Guerrero (2004) explains that inner speech aids in processing language being heard or read through silent repetition, comprehension, association, and pronunciation practice. This internal dialogue helps learners work on selected segments of L2 material, such as translating into their first language, analyzing words, or making visual or contextual connections. Thus, inner speech can create a stress-free environment for practicing the language, allow self-regulation, and help learners observe and correct their mistakes. Using inner speech for mental rehearsal might improve fluency and readiness for real-life interactions, fostering familiarity and confidence with the language. Pablo Fossa (2022) conducted a study on the effects of inner speech L1 on culture and education, arguing that inner speech significantly enhances one's understanding of their language development journey. His experiment supported Vygotsky's claim that inner speech correlates with task difficulty: the more challenging the task, the more inner speech was used.

When the literature is reviewed, it is evident that studies on inner speech in second language acquisition are quite limited. However, considering the findings of the few existing studies, it can be suggested that the inner voice could serve as a valuable tool for cognitive and metacognitive activities in second language acquisition. For instance, learners can use their inner voice to plan, monitor, and evaluate their language use, which can promote the development of metacognitive strategies (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Moreover, it is possible to hear the teacher's voice in a person's head to focus on the accent, which is helpful for the learner (Dahlen & Caldwell-Harris, 2013). Maftoon and Bahrami (2002) conducted a study to use inner speech as mental rehearsal and concluded that participants used inner speech during mental rehearsing. Then, when de Guerrero (2004) examined the development of L2 as inner speech, she concluded that

learners of a second language often lack sufficient proficiency to use internal dialogue in the L2 for managing complex cognitive tasks. Filik and Barber (2011), in their study to observe inner speech during silent reading, found disturbances in how the eyes move when the ending word failed to rhyme, with the disruption influenced by the reader's accent. The finding indicated that inner speech mirrors the sound of individuals' own voices. Abadikhah and Khorshidi (2013) examined the private speech phenomenon in collaborative interaction, and it was observed that both groups engaged in private speech, albeit with a minor variation. In Jiménez Jiménez's (2015) study investigating private speech during problem-solving activities, the findings revealed that for bilingual individuals, their primary language significantly influenced their thought processes, whereas their secondary language offered a supplementary collection of cognitive tools and techniques, which were engaged when necessary. Gilead (2019) concluded that the internal dialogue of second language learners develops from their involvement in public speaking activities.

### **Purpose of the study**

Contrary to expectations, there are not as many studies on the use of inner speech in foreign language learning as there are on inner speech itself. From this vantage point, this study aims to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' inner speech during L2 tasks and teaching practicum. Previous studies have yet to be conducted on a group that can use inner speech to simultaneously learn and teach a foreign language and use it in task-based exercises. Therefore, this research provides a study on the characteristics of inner speech in pre-service L2 teachers' learning and teaching experiences so as to lay the groundwork for future research.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This research takes a qualitative case study approach to provide insights into the inner speech of pre-service EFL teachers during L2 tasks in their undergraduate courses instructed in English and teaching practicums. A qualitative case study involves a detailed examination and analysis of one or multiple cases, focusing on events, programs, activities, or individuals to gain in-depth insights (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative approach is appropriate for understanding complex, subjective experiences of inner speech as they occur in real-life contexts. The case study method allowed for an in-depth analysis of participants' inner speech to get elaborated information on characteristics, purposes, and occurrences of inner speech during both learning and teaching activities. Such an integrated design would effectively catch subjective experiences as they unfold, permitting granular examinations of subjects' perceptions and experiences.

### **2.2. Participants**

The participants in this study were 12 Turkish pre-service teachers of English enrolled in an English Language Teaching program at a higher education institution in Türkiye (6 male and 6 female). The participants are selected from students who, during the period of the study, were involved in L2 learning tasks and teaching practicums. Therefore, the sample type employed in this study was opportunity sampling as they met the convenience-based practical criteria (Dörnyei, 2007). All the participants gave informed consent to participate in the study and were briefed about the purpose and procedure of the research.

### **2.3. Instruments**

Data was collected through the *inner speech diary*, an event-contingent action log developed for this study. In event-contingent studies, participants must report their experiences each time a particular event takes place (Dörnyei, 2007), so participants were asked to record their inner speech experiences as close as possible to the time they occurred over four weeks. The diary format was chosen for its flexibility, allowing participants to note subjective experiences close to the time they happened, thus minimizing recall bias and

ensuring accurate data capture (Breakwell, 2012). The participants were asked to register experiences of inner speech immediately after they had taken place, noting the context, language, content, purpose, duration, and outcome of that inner speech. The structured format of the Inner Speech Diary included the following fields:

- Name-Surname:
- Date:
- Inner Speech Number:
- When did it happen (please specify the moment):
- What language was it in?
- What did you say to yourself/What did you hear?
- Did you have a purpose?
- How long did it last?
- What happened at the end?
- Other specific comments on the experience:

## **2.4. Data Collection**

Prior to the data collection, the participants were informed about the ethical principles and provided with a diary instruction sheet that gave them instructions about how to fill in their diaries. Participants were asked to bring their diaries with them during lessons and practicum sessions so that the data could be written down promptly after an event or as soon as possible afterward.

During a month, participants noted every instance of inner speech by recording the time it occurred, the language in which it occurred, what was said, why it was said, how long it lasted, and what happened after it occurred, or what was reflected upon after it ended. Completed diary pages submitted to the researchers on a weekly basis. This ongoing supervision made it possible for the researchers to clarify any ambiguous entries and remind participants to record information about their experiences consistently. The process continued for a period of four weeks without interruption, thus enabling the full collection of data entries from all participants.

## **2.5. Data Analysis**

The data obtained from inner speech diaries were submitted to inductive content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In line with this approach, similar concepts were grouped under themes and sub-themes to facilitate interpretation in a way that readers can easily understand. The researchers read the data multiple times, and codes were assigned at the word or sentence level to identify meaningful relationships. After the initial coding by the first researcher, the second researcher re-coded the data for reliability purposes, achieving an inter-coder reliability of 81% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the remaining 19%, inconsistencies and discrepancies were discussed and resolved to reach a consensus. Each theme was defined and named meaningfully to enhance understanding of the role of inner speech within the contexts of L2 learning and teaching. The finalized themes were then used to interpret the findings and draw conclusions regarding the nature and function of inner speech in pre-service EFL teachers.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1. Inner speech diary findings during courses in English**

Table 1 outlines six recurring themes from the inner speech diaries, reflecting participants' cognitive and emotional engagement during their courses instructed in English. These themes encompass concerns related to course tasks, irrelevant ideas, well-being and health, classroom dynamics, emotional status, and teacher quality. Each theme captures specific aspects of participants' internal dialogues, ranging from task-related anxieties to broader reflections on their experiences and environment. In the subsequent sections, these

themes are explored in greater detail to highlight their significance in understanding the nature and role of inner speech in second language learning contexts.

**Table 1**

*Pre-service EFL teachers' inner speech during courses*

Theme	f	Sample quotations
Concerns related to task/course	14	P2: <i>'I cannot recall exactly when we did this (the activity). It should have been covered last week, I guess. I really hope she doesn't pick me for the answer. I do not want to fail.'</i> P4: <i>I wondered if I would fail because of being absence.</i>
Daily news and irrelevant ideas	12	P2: <i>Bayon is a great car. I hope I can buy it one day.</i> P6: <i>I really want to play a game tonight. Should I text my friends now? Whatever, I'll text after the course.</i>
Wellbeing and health	7	P4: <i>I want to sleep. I wish I could sleep instead of attending a lecture.</i> P5: <i>I wish I could sleep now! If I leave and go to sleep will the teacher notice? Anyway, let me stay a little longer.</i>
Classroom dynamics	6	P1: <i>The teacher said hi, should I turn on my microphone and say hi? Would there be background noises?</i> P11: <i>How nonsense picking people randomly to tell the answer! I hate this.</i>
Emotional status	3	P5: <i>Could the people who have the same problem understand each other?</i> P11: <i>Which song can describe my sadness? It is seems like summertime sadness, but it's spring now.</i>
Teacher quality	3	P11: <i>The background of the teacher is quite interesting. Her education level was pretty good.</i> P1: <i>How boring just reading the slides from the smartboard. I don't think the teacher is knowledgeable.</i>

#### *Concerns related to the course*

The findings indicate that concerns related to the course emerged as the most prominent theme in the table, with seven participants engaging in this type of inner speech a total of 14 times. Notably, five female and two male participants expressed similar concerns, with female participants displaying a higher frequency of self-directed speech regarding course-related matters. This theme encompasses internal dialogues related to achievement, attendance, and the recall of previously discussed topics during the learning process. For example, Participant 2 (P2) reflected on forgetting the subject matter of the previous week's discussion, stating, *'I cannot recall exactly when we did this. It should have been covered last week, I guess. I really hope she doesn't pick me for the answer. I do not want to fail'*. P4 expressed concerns about attendance,

noting, *'I don't stay long for the attendance part. I wondered if I would fail because of being absent'*. These examples suggest that participants often experienced anxious inner dialogues related to course performance, which seemed to detract from their use of the target language for practice.

#### *Irrelevant ideas*

The findings reveal that seven participants engaged in inner dialogues classified as irrelevant ideas a total of 12 times. The gender distribution for this theme shows equal representation among participants. This category encompasses inner speech unrelated to the course content, including thoughts about evening plans or future activities. For instance, P6 reflected, *'I really want to play a game tonight. Should I text my friends now? Whatever, I'll text after the course'*. The theme of irrelevant ideas, which was prominent in the inner speech of the participants, was formed by the current events, personal issues, or thoughts about social life that came to their minds outside the topics they should focus on in the lesson. This situation is also defined as 'mind-wandering' in the literature, and in this process, the individual's thoughts deviate from the target and move in another direction. The findings coincide with the findings of Seli et al. (2016), who, in their study, found that distractions can occur in the learning process and categorised them as intentional and unintentional. Such irrelevant inner dialogues could be attributed to the nature of some online course sessions that the participants had, where students may experience distraction and a sense of isolation. These factors are likely to reduce engagement with the lesson, leading participants to focus on unrelated topics. Consequently, inner speech related to irrelevant ideas appears to stem from external environmental factors rather than academic or task-related challenges.

#### *Wellbeing and health*

The findings indicate that six participants recorded inner dialogues related to well-being and health a total of seven times. A majority of these participants were female, suggesting that female students might be more inclined to express thoughts about their health and feelings of boredom. For instance, P5 reflected on her physical condition, stating, *'I feel terribly sleepy. What should I do? I want to sleep. Should I sleep during the course or afterward?'*, highlighting the impact of fatigue on her ability to focus. Such inner dialogues might stem from physical discomfort or emotional fatigue, which could distract students from engaging fully with the learning process. These findings align with and are further supported by recent ecological studies on teacher wellbeing (Mairitsch et al., 2021). In this study, participants' inner speech reveals hedonic aspects of well-being, such as momentary emotions of tiredness or stress, as well as eudemonic concerns—underlying struggles with purpose, balance, and self-actualization (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Inner dialogue, such as P5's, is not merely a complaint but part of a broader self-regulatory narrative, reflecting attempts to manage limited resources of energy and attention under duress.

#### *Classroom dynamics*

The findings reveal that four participants recorded inner speech related to classroom dynamics a total of six times. This theme encompasses inner monologues addressing interactions with the teacher, hesitations regarding peers' assignments, and reflections on classroom activities. Most of the participants who engaged in such inner dialogues were again female, suggesting that female students might be more likely to reflect on classroom dynamics and express hesitations during lectures. For example, P4 questioned the authenticity of a peer's in-class task, stating, *'I wonder if my friends used AI for the in-class task? It is not like their spelling, and it has a more professional spelling. I guess it's ChatGPT...?'*, which highlights her doubts and hesitancy about her peers' work. P11 expressed frustration with the teacher's approach, noting, *'How nonsense picking people randomly to tell the answer! I hate this'*. P11's inner speech confirmed that learners often used inner speech to voice their hesitations and frustrations. Inner speech related to classroom dynamics reveals how pre-service EFL teachers are actively evaluating both the pedagogical practices of their instructors and the behaviors of their peers, often through the lens of fairness, competence, and authenticity. These internal dialogues mirror broader sociocultural processes in classroom life and

underscore the need for transparent pedagogical practices, inclusive participation formats, and open conversations about academic integrity. By encouraging structured reflection and fostering trust in peer interaction, teacher educators can support the development of more emotionally secure and critically engaged classroom environments.

#### *Emotional status*

Language learning process is a deep social and emotional journey (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Richards, 2022; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Emotional factors, both positive and negative, play a crucial role in shaping learners' involvement in language learning environments. In recent years, researchers have started to pay more attention to the emotional aspects of both negative feelings, such as anxiety (MacIntyre, 2017), and positive feelings, such as enjoyment (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). The emotions were also evident in this study as reflected in the inner dialogues of three participants. This theme encompasses reflections and self-conversations on emotional experiences and feelings. For example, P5's reflective question, *'Could the people who have the same problem understand each other?'* signals an emergent sense of empathic resonance—the recognition of shared emotional struggles with others. Empathy, while often underrepresented in pre-service teacher education, is critical for successful language learning and classroom life (Mercer, 2016). For pre-service teachers, reflective practices—including journaling and guided reflection on emotional episodes during practicum—might offer a pathway to better empathic awareness (Krzmaric, 2014). Encouraging trainees to document emotional peaks and valleys in their teaching journey can help externalize and process their inner speech, transforming what might otherwise remain private or chaotic into structured self-understanding.

#### *Teacher quality*

Participants recorded inner dialogues related to the teacher's credentials, with a total of three instances. For example, P11 noted, *'The background of the teacher is quite interesting. Her education was pretty good'*, reflecting her admiration for the teacher's academic qualifications. This finding aligns with the concept of modelling in teacher education, particularly as discussed in Lunenberg et al. (2007). They argue that teacher educators inevitably function as role models, whether intentionally or not. The way teacher educators teach—how they explain content, respond to challenges, and engage students—sends powerful messages about what good teaching looks like. Thus, when pre-service teachers focus their inner speech on their instructor's qualifications or instructional presence, they may be reflecting not only on competence but also on pedagogical congruence—the alignment between what is taught and how it is taught. P11's inner speech instance not only suggests that some learners evaluate their teachers' professional backgrounds and teaching quality during their inner dialogues but also a sense of detachment from the lesson content. Inner speeches of this nature might occur when students perceive a lack of engagement or stimulation in the classroom environment, leading their thoughts to drift toward evaluating the teacher rather than focusing on the task at hand. Teachers should be aware of how their professional image, teaching strategies, and engagement levels influence students' inner speech and overall learning experiences. Active teaching methods, coupled with efforts to establish a positive rapport with students, may help minimize such detachment and foster a more interactive and focused learning environment.

### **3.2. Inner speech diary findings during teaching practicum**

The inner speech themes identified during the teaching practicum, as outlined in Table 2, reflect participants' multifaceted experiences as both learners and emerging teachers. While some themes, such as well-being and irrelevant ideas, overlap with those from Table 1, others, like mentoring quality and teaching skills, are unique to their teaching context. These inner dialogues provide valuable insights into how participants navigated challenges, reflected on their teaching practices, and envisioned their professional futures. In the sections that follow, these themes are explored in depth to understand their significance and implications for language education.

**Table 2**  
*Pre-service EFL teachers' inner speech during teaching practicum*

Theme	f	Sample quotations
Daily news and irrelevant Ideas	17	P4: <i>I wonder how many GB of internet do I have?</i> P10: <i>Man, money again. I am sick of having monetary issues, I hate this.</i>
Student characteristics	15	P6: <i>Why are the students acting very comfy in front of their teacher? They must be very complacent.</i> P3: <i>The level of the students very high, I think they can do the activity.</i>
Mentoring quality	7	P6: <i>The teacher's listening exam for the students way too easy for them. He could prepare it a little bit hard.</i> P12: <i>It is a shame that the teacher doesn't care the students.</i>
Teaching skills	8	P5: <i>How should I warn the students without hurting their feelings? It's hard to find a way of approaching them.</i> P4: <i>The students were very successful about answering to the follow-up questions.</i>
Wellbeing and health	5	P2: <i>I do not feel very good. I would like to go out and breathe some fresh air.</i> P11: <i>I wish I did not have a dry eye problem. It hurts.</i>
Future plans and thoughts	3	P11: <i>Is the teaching my dream job? If there is a job like this, I am sure I will find that one day and it will be my dream job.</i> P12: <i>What will you do if you become the teacher of your own child? How will you react</i>

#### *Daily news and irrelevant ideas*

The results revealed that nine participants recorded inner dialogues that could be categorized under daily news and irrelevant ideas a total of 17 times. Interestingly, this theme showed a gender imbalance, with male participants reporting such inner speech more frequently ( $n = 13$ ). A wide range of non-academic reflections is involved under this theme. For instance, P12 expressed concern about societal issues, stating, *'What's that I heard? It's unfortunate that a 10-year-old talks politics. Politics should not have sunk to such a low age'* highlighting the diversity of inner speech under this category. This finding closely aligns with the earlier theme identified during courses in English, where participants' inner speech occasionally drifted toward irrelevant personal reflections and non-academic concerns. Both contexts—courses and teaching practicum—highlight the instances where attention shifts away from the intended task due to external triggers or internal distraction. This tendency may stem from factors such as distraction, lack of engagement, or boredom. Such reflections highlight the need for strategies to maintain students' focus and reduce irrelevant inner dialogues during lessons.

#### *Student characteristics*

This category includes inner conversations about student types, proficiency levels, and strategies for approaching students. Participants often viewed classroom experiences through a developing teacher lens, shifting their focus from themselves to their students as they navigated the practicum. They demonstrated a willingness to explore complex educational questions and adapt their approaches based on observed learner traits. For example, P5 questioned her assumptions during an observation: *'Girls seem to have more success than the boys in this class. Is it ethical to do the comparison between genders? Why do the boys have less success than the girls? They seem interested in the lesson'*. This illustrates a reflective tension—

between noticing patterns in the classroom and avoiding essentialist thinking—while also revealing a genuine concern for student equity. Such inner dialogues reflect an attempt to understand students not only as learners but as individuals shaped by diverse experiences and socio-cultural backgrounds. This finding resonates with Numrich's (1996) study, which shows that novice teachers express growing concern with classroom dynamics, often seeking to make sense of student behaviors in nuanced ways.

#### *Mentoring quality*

A total of seven instances on mentoring quality were recorded across five participants, reflecting their focus on evaluating and understanding their mentor teachers' approaches. This reflective practice signals an emerging sense of professional consciousness, as participants analyzed and critiqued aspects of teaching quality and methodology. For example, one participant stated, *'The teacher's listening exam for the students was way too easy for them. He could prepare it a little bit hard'* (P6). Such candid evaluations indicate not only critical engagement but also developing pedagogical awareness. This theme gains further significance when situated within the broader context of mentoring dynamics in ELT practicum, particularly as described by Aydın and Ok (2020). They argue that the variability in mentoring quality may arise from systemic issues such as the absence of formal mentor training, mismatched expectations between universities and schools, and a lack of structured reflection practices. In this light, the participant critiques in the current study can be seen not merely as isolated personal reactions but as reflections of a broader structural gap in mentoring preparation and support. For instance, when mentors neglect reflective dialogue or co-planning opportunities, pre-service teachers are left to navigate teaching challenges without adequate scaffolding—often triggering critical inner speech and evaluative self-talk.

#### *Teaching skills*

Inner speech diary entries revealed that six participants reflected on their teaching abilities a total of eight times. This theme captures their internal deliberations concerning various aspects of teaching, such as student achievement, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices. Participants frequently engaged in self-evaluation, considering how best to respond to classroom challenges and improve their pedagogical effectiveness. A notable pattern that emerged was the participants' awareness of their own past language learning experiences and how these shaped their current teaching decisions. For instance, P5 asked herself, *'How should I warn the students without hurting their feelings? It's hard to find a way of approaching them,'* expressing uncertainty about how to correct student errors in a sensitive and constructive manner. This reflection aligns with Numrich's (1996) findings, which suggest that pre-service teachers often model their classroom communication on their own learning histories. Thus, their inner speech reveals a critical negotiation between pedagogical intent and emotional empathy, rooted in personal learning memories.

#### *Wellbeing and health*

Similar to the findings from the coursework phase, several participants used inner speech to express concerns related to physical and emotional well-being during the teaching practicum. These reflections often surfaced in response to the heightened demands and stressors of classroom teaching, suggesting a continuation—and in some cases, intensification—of the well-being challenges previously observed. For example, P2 shared, *'I do not feel very good. I would like to go out and breathe some fresh air,'* highlighting the immediate impact of physical or emotional strain on focus and classroom presence. While such statements may appear momentary or casual, they point to deeper hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being—mirroring the dual framework discussed in ecological studies of teacher well-being (Mairitsch et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2001). As in the coursework phase, these inner dialogues reflect not only momentary fatigue or discomfort but also self-regulatory efforts to cope with internal and environmental pressures. These findings reinforce the need to integrate well-being support into teacher training programs.

Emotional self-awareness, self-regulation strategies, or other well-documented practices could be intentionally embedded into practicum seminars.

#### *Future plans and thoughts*

Finally, two participants engaged in inner speeches about their future plans and thoughts three times. The tendency to focus on future plans included considerations about career aspirations and personal goals. For example, P11 noted, *'Is teaching my dream job? If there is a job like this, I am sure I will find it one day, and it will be my dream job.'* The participants' illustration of a deep personal reflection on their future trajectory offers valuable insights for supporting pre-service teachers' career development and self-awareness during training. It is possible that challenging or negative experiences encountered during the teaching practicum might lead participants to question their compatibility with the teaching profession. Such doubts, triggered by difficult experiences, may prompt inner dialogues as participants reflect on their aspirations and consider alternative career paths.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This research study examined the inner speech phenomena experienced by Turkish pre-service EFL teachers throughout their academic courses and teaching practicums. Utilizing inner speech diaries as the data collection tool, six salient themes emerged both in the academic courses phase and the teaching practicum phase. During the coursework phase, participants' inner speech often centered on task-related concerns, irrelevant thoughts, and well-being. These reflections revealed anxiety about course performance, frequent distractions, and a focus on personal well-being. Themes such as classroom dynamics and perceptions of teacher quality highlighted the participants' engagement with their learning environment, while emotional responses illustrated the significant influence of affective factors in shaping their experiences. On the other hand, in the teaching practicum phase, inner speech shifted to include themes such as student characteristics, mentoring quality, and teaching skills. These reflections demonstrated the participants' growing awareness of classroom management, professional responsibilities, and the need to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics. While themes like well-being and irrelevant thoughts persisted, new insights emerged regarding participants' aspirations and future plans, revealing their deeper engagement with professional identity formation. The findings emphasize the complex and multifaceted character of inner speech, serving not only as an instrumental mechanism for self-regulation but also as a reflective lens through which the challenges inherent in second language acquisition and teacher development are illuminated.

The results of this study contribute to the limited body of literature on inner speech in second language acquisition by offering insights into its role in the intersection of learning and teaching contexts. The findings highlight the need for teacher education programs to address the emotional and cognitive demands of pre-service teachers, incorporating strategies that leverage inner speech for effective language learning and teaching practices. For instance, fostering metacognitive strategies, providing emotional support, and offering structured reflection activities could help optimize the use of inner speech. Future investigations could expand upon this foundational work by examining inner speech across varied educational contexts, including comparative studies between novice and experienced teachers or learners at differing levels of L2 proficiency. Furthermore, investigating the interaction between inner speech and classroom dynamics could yield practical implications for the integration of innovative pedagogical methodologies within foreign language education.

#### **5. Limitations**

While this study provides valuable insights into the inner speech experiences of pre-service EFL teachers, there are several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, consisting of 12 pre-service teachers. Although the small sample size enabled in-depth qualitative exploration, the findings may not be

generalizable to a broader population of pre-service EFL teachers in other contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported data through inner speech diaries, which may be subject to recall bias - even though the participants were guided to jot down the inner speech occurrences immediately. Participants might not have captured every instance of inner speech or may have selectively reported experiences they perceived as more relevant or appropriate. Third, the study focused exclusively on senior-year pre-service teachers who had already developed a relatively advanced proficiency in English and substantial teaching experience through their practicums. This focus may have overlooked variations in inner speech among learners at different proficiency levels or stages of teacher development. Lastly, the study did not account for individual differences in personality, learning styles, or cognitive tendencies, which could influence how participants engage with their inner speech.

### Note on Ethical Issues

The authors confirm that ethical approval was obtained from Bartın University (Approval Date: 22/04/2024).

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