



*The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*  
 Volume 16, Number 1, April 2016

## **Supervision in Language Teaching: A Supervisor's and Three Trainee Teachers' Perspectives**

**Eda Kahyalar**  
 Cukurova University

**İlkay Çelik Yazıcı**  
 Cukurova University

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article reports on the findings from a study which investigated supervision in language teaching from a supervisor's and her three trainee teachers' perspectives. The data in the study were from three sources: 1) audio recordings of the supervisor's feedback sessions with each trainee teacher, 2) audio recording of an interview between the supervisor and the researcher, in which her beliefs about and her practice of supervision are investigated, 3) audio recordings of interviews with the trainee teachers, which were conducted to elicit their beliefs about and expectations from supervision. The study presents the supervisor's beliefs about supervision, her approach to supervision and her strategies to make the supervision process more beneficial to the trainees despite the time constraints and her heavy work load. Moreover, the trainee teachers' beliefs about supervision and their expectations from this process are described.*

*Key Words: Supervision, supervisor, trainee teacher.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the field of pre-service language teacher education, one of the most significant elements is the practicum which gives the trainees the opportunity for hands-on experience. The trainees in English Language Teaching (ELT) departments attend methodology courses at the university to improve their pedagogical knowledge and the practicum gives them the opportunity to apply what they have learnt in those courses. According to Zeichner (1990), trainees consider the practicum experience as the most important element in their teacher training. In connection with this, Bhargava (2009) states that a vital aspect of teacher training programme is the teaching practice and it serves as an opportunity to be exposed to the realities of teaching and performance of professional activities. Teaching practice gives a sense of accomplishment to student teachers. They learn to take responsibility; they gain confidence and improve upon their classroom management skills. Hascher et al. (2004) also consider practica an important pre-service learning context for several reasons: providing classroom experiences, being useful in evaluating teaching ability, supporting socialization within the profession, stimulating the development of teaching skills in pre-service teachers, providing a protected field of experimentation, allowing insights into new perspectives and increasing motivation to continue studying. Supervision, as a means for providing

feedback for making changes to improve student teachers' practice, is an important element of the practicum experience.

### **Models of supervision**

Gebhard (in Richards & Nunan 1990) outlines six models of supervision: directive, alternative, collaborative, nondirective, creative and self-help explorative.

In directive supervision, the supervisor directs and informs the teacher, models teaching behaviours, and evaluates the teacher's mastery of defined behaviours. This is a prescriptive approach and views the person as an "input-output" system. The theory underlying directive supervision is behaviourism because this approach is based on the imitation of models and shaping the teacher's behaviours. There are several problems with directive supervision. First, teaching is a complex social behaviour and it is not possible to provide the teacher with model teaching behaviours without considering their approach to teaching or their idea of what good teaching is. This model ignores the differences in teachers' beliefs, values and experiences. Second, as Gebhard (*ibid.*) suggests, this model may cause feelings of defensiveness and low self-esteem on the part of the teachers because they see themselves inferior to the supervisor. As a result, they may be discouraged to explore and try alternative ways of teaching or they may pretend to apply the defined behaviours. Third, it is impossible to define "good teaching behaviours" which can be applied in all settings and trying to do so limits the teachers' abilities to think of alternative techniques when these so-called "good teaching behaviours" do not suit the context or the learners. Although his model is not appropriate in many contexts, Goldsberry (in Bailey, 2006) sees this model as applicable in contexts when teachers know and admit that they know less about teaching than the supervisor, when there is a need to "correct deficient teaching" and to promote uniformity and consistency across teachers.

In alternative supervision, the role of the supervisor is to suggest a variety of alternatives to what the teacher has done in the classroom. Providing the teachers with alternatives can reduce their anxiety over deciding what to do next especially if they do not have many at their disposal, but still they are the decision makers in alternative supervision. Freeman (1982) suggests that alternative supervision works best if the supervisor is not judgmental and does not favour any of the alternatives. The aim of suggesting a variety of alternatives is for teachers to try them, see the consequences and widen the scope of what a teacher will consider doing.

Like in directive supervision, there is a prescriptive approach to teaching in alternative supervision because the supervisor provides the alternatives and despite being the decision maker, the teacher chooses one alternative among the ones that have been prescribed by the supervisor. Although it seems like a prescriptive approach, this model raises awareness of one's routines and their rationale. The theory underlying this model is humanistic psychology since its emphasis is on self-agency and personal change that is enabled but not directed by the supervisor. Unlike in directive supervision, the supervisor in this model does not attempt to impose change because the teachers are allowed to exercise their individual choices. The supervisor utilizes a more problem-solving approach, thus encourages critical reflection on practice. The strength of this model is that the teachers can become aware of their habitual actions in class, contrast them with the alternatives provided by the supervisor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. On the other hand, there is a weakness of this model that the teacher is not given the opportunity to define the problems and to think of possible solutions by themselves, thus, in a way, it discourages self-determination and self-expression.

In collaborative supervision, the supervisor's role is to work with teachers without directing them. The supervisor and the teacher make all the decisions together and the supervisor tries to establish a sharing relationship. Cogan (1973) suggests that teaching is a problem-solving process, so sharing of ideas between the teacher and the supervisor is a necessary condition. In collaborative supervision, while addressing a problem in the teacher's classroom teaching, the teacher and the supervisor work together. They create a hypothesis, experiment, and implement strategies that appear to offer a reasonable solution to the problem under consideration.

There are two underlying theories of this humanistic approach to supervision: Dewey's reflective thinking and Schön's theory of professional expertise. According to Dewey (in Roberts, 1998), reflection contributes to our personal growth by freeing us from a single view of a situation which would restrict the

way we define problems and the resulting solutions. In collaborative supervision, the supervisor works together with the teacher and supervision is viewed as a reflective cycle and alternative perspectives on a problem help the teacher to think of a wider range of possible solutions. This model of supervision is consistent with Schön's description of "reflection-on-action", (in Roberts, 1998) that is after the event because a sharing of ideas between the supervisor and the teacher enables the teacher to frame and reframe situations and problems. As reflective practitioners, in the process of understanding and evaluating their own practice, they are involved in reflection-on-action. The strength of this model is that it allows the teachers to develop critical thinking ability because it enables them to see problems from different perspectives which therefore allow a wider range of possible solutions. This is beneficial for both personal and professional growth since it fosters autonomy and self-determination.

In nondirective supervision, the supervisor usually attempts to have the teacher to come up with his/her own solutions to teaching problems, listen and demonstrate an understanding of what s/he has said. The supervisor restates how s/he has understood the teacher's comments rather than repeating word-for-word what the teacher has said (Gebhart in Richards & Nunan 1990). The theories underlying this nonjudgmental approach to supervision are humanistic psychology and constructivism because the supervisor works from the teacher's perceptions of self and of the world, not from his point of view. The teacher is assumed to be capable of growth by means of inner resources because he or she is viewed as a "whole person". The strength of this model is that the supervisor's nonjudgmental approach to the teacher's comments encourages self-expression and sharing of ideas. This may help the teacher to be aware of his/her basic assumptions, to question them, to feel the freedom to create choices and try new ideas. Moreover, the supervisor can make the teacher feel worthwhile, important and capable of growth. However, not all teachers are willing to come up with their own solutions to teaching problems. For instance, while working with novice teachers, the supervisor might be expected to offer suggestions on the best way to teach or to advise teachers by providing alternative ways of teaching. Furthermore, according to Roberts (1998), there might be gaps in a person's knowledge and experience or blind spots about themselves. Other people are needed to make the person aware of those gaps and to find the knowledge that they need, so we need feedback to learn. Thus, nondirective supervision may not be appropriate in some contexts.

The next model, creative supervision is a combination of the aforementioned models or of supervisory behaviours. Since each model of supervision has some weaknesses and may not be appropriate in some contexts, sometimes a combination of different models or a combination of supervisory behaviours from different models may be needed (Gebhard in Richards & Nunan, 1990). According to Freeman (in Richards & Nunan, 1990), a particular supervisory approach can be selected according to the type of information the teacher is seeking. If novice teachers are trying to find out "what" to teach, he uses directive approach. If they want to find out "how" to teach, he uses an alternative approach. He uses a nondirective approach if they want to know "why" they teach. Creative supervision has several strengths. First, this model allows the supervisor to adopt the appropriate approach to a particular context by encouraging freedom. Second, the supervisor can try new ideas in supervising and see the consequences, so this model encourages reflective thinking on the part of the supervisor. Third, it frees the supervisor from the limits of one single model so s/he can make valuable contributions to the teacher's practice. Lastly, this model is advantageous to the teachers because they are supervised with a combination of different models or a combination of supervisory behaviours and thus, they can benefit from the strengths of each model of supervision.

The last supervisory model, self-help-explorative supervision was proposed by Fanselow (in Richards & Nunan, 1990) as an extension of creative supervision. Fanselow avoids the use of the word "supervisor", instead he uses the term "visiting teacher" because he believes that the word "supervisor" hardly supports autonomy. In self-help-explorative supervision, both teachers and visiting teachers gain awareness of their teaching behaviours and their consequences through observation and exploration. As a result, they can construct and reconstruct teaching based on awareness gained from observing each other's classes. The visiting teacher is not seen as an authority whose job is to help teachers improve their teaching but as another teacher who wants to learn more about his/her own teaching by observing others teach. There

are several systems that teachers can use to guide their observations systematically so that they could have a common language to talk about the teaching they observe.

Self-help-explorative supervision is based on constructivism and humanistic theory because perceptions of the individual are valued and learning is seen in terms of personal change. There are several strengths of self-help-explorative supervision. First, it is beneficial to both teachers and the visiting teachers because they can adopt a critical attitude to themselves and their own teaching because this model requires a degree of self-awareness to uncover and challenge one's espoused personal beliefs. Second, it prevents teachers from feeling inferior because the visiting teacher is not regarded as an authority and the focus is on mutual growth. Third, this model of supervision helps to establish a warm and empathetic relationship between the teachers and the visiting teacher, which provides an enthusiasm for and belief in supervision.

As can be seen, there is a wide choice of supervisory behaviours that supervisors can select from. Since the aim of supervision is to develop teachers' practices, rather than adopting one single model, the supervisors should select the appropriate supervisory approach for different contexts, adopt a nonjudgmental approach which encourages self-expression and gives the teachers the freedom to create choices and try new ideas. Furthermore, it is important for supervisors to emphasize personal change that is enabled but not directed by others since attempts to impose change cause defensiveness and do not really work. Also, differences in teachers' beliefs, values and experiences should be taken into consideration while supervising. Giving feedback to the trainee teachers is an essential part of the supervisors' job. To make the feedback effective, there are some conditions to be met during its provision. Brinko (1993) presents a review of literature related to feedback in the fields of education, psychology, and organizational behaviour; and suggests a number of conditions that can enhance the effectiveness of feedback. The conditions which are relevant to language teacher supervision are below.

Feedback is more effective when

- information is gathered from a number of sources
- information is gathered from oneself as well as from others
- the consultant is authentic, respectful, supportive, empathic, non-judgemental, and able to keep consultations confidential conveyed in a variety of modes
- it contains accurate data and irrefutable evidence, concrete information, and specific data
- it focuses upon behaviour
- it contains models of appropriate behaviour given as soon as possible after performance
- it is considered as a process, not a one-time quick fix
- it considers the recipient's amount of experience and developmental stage
- it is sensitive to the recipient's self-esteem
- negative information is self-referenced, "sandwiched" between positive information, and devoid of inflammatory language
- it allows for response and interaction
- given frequently, but not excessively

Based on the information in the sections above, the aim of the present study is to find out the beliefs about supervision and the practice of supervision in language teaching from a supervisor's and her three trainee teachers' perspectives. Moreover, the feedback from the supervisor in the feedback sessions are analysed according to the conditions presented in Brinko (ibid.).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

There are four participants, all of whom voluntarily took part in this study. Three of them are trainee teachers who are students in ELT Department at Çukurova University and one of them is their supervisor

who is an instructor in the same department. The trainee teachers were placed in an Anatolian High School for their practicum.

The practicum for the fourth year student teachers in this department lasts for two terms. In the first term, they are supposed to observe lessons and report their observations, and they are actively involved in teaching in the second term. Their teaching practices are evaluated once by their supervisor. In order to ensure that the participants felt comfortable and expressed their real beliefs and practices during the interviews in the data collection process, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants briefly. Moreover, they were told that their names would not be mentioned and they were not going to be judged because of any of their beliefs or practices. There are relatively few participants in the study because the researcher intended to investigate and describe their beliefs and practices in depth.

### **Instruments**

Two questionnaires were used as the instruments of the study (See Appendix). The first one, which was used to interview the supervisor about her beliefs about and her practices in supervision, consisted of eight open-ended questions and one question in which she had to select from three answers. The second one, on the other hand, was composed of eight open-ended questions and it was used to elicit the trainee teachers' beliefs about supervision. There were parallel questions in the two questionnaires to compare and contrast the TTs' and the supervisor's views.

Although the participants' were advanced speakers of English, the interviews were in Turkish, the participants' native language, because the researcher and the participants agreed that they would feel more confident and could express themselves more easily in their native language. Because there is a possibility that the participants may answer the questions in a way which they think the researcher would like them to do, another way to promote confidence in the instruments was to ask different people to check the interview questions so as to find out whether they included any assumptions or biases. The questions were revised according to the feedback from those people before data collection and the participants' real beliefs could be elicited in this way.

## **RESULTS**

As the first step in data collection, with the aim of finding out about the supervisor's approach to supervision, the researcher audio-taped the feedback session of each trainee teacher with the supervisor. The feedback sessions were in the supervisor's office and they were held on the same day. After these recordings, the interview with the supervisor was conducted in her office. For the interviews with the trainee teachers, time was arranged according to their schedule. The interview with each trainee teacher was conducted in the researcher's office. All of the interviews were recorded, which provided retrievable data. The feedback sessions and the interviews were then transcribed. Qualitative approach was used in order to transform the data into findings.

Information about data analysis and results is presented in two subsections: The first subsection is about the feedback sessions and the second one is about the interviews.

### **Feedback Sessions**

As mentioned before, to find out about the supervisor's approach to supervision, the feedback session of the supervisor with each trainee teacher was recorded. Table 1 below presents the supervisor's supervisory behaviours identified during the feedback sessions with trainee teacher 1 (TT1 henceforth), trainee teacher 2 (TT2 henceforth) and trainee teacher 3 (TT3 henceforth), and the supervisory model on which each behaviour is based on.

**Table 1.**Supervisory behaviours during the feedback sessions and the supervisory models on which they are based on

Supervisory Behaviour	With TT1	With TT2	With TT3	Based on
1.Starting the session with the TT's self assessment	√	√	√	Nondirective supervision
2.Suggesting an alternative to what the TT has done in class	√	√	√	Alternative supervision
3.Asking questions to encourage critical reflection on the TT's decisions related to the lesson plan	√	√	√	Nondirective supervision
4.Providing models for appropriate behaviour	√	√	√	Directive supervision

As it can be seen in Table 1, rather than adopting one model, the supervisor uses a model which is a combination of nondirective, alternative and directive supervision. Explanation for and an example of each behaviour are provided below.

The first and the third supervisory behaviours are based on the assumptions of nondirective supervision. The supervisor starts the feedback session with the TT's self assessment, which shows that she values their perceptions. Writing a self-assessment report helps the TTs to gain awareness of their teaching behaviours and they can adopt a critical attitude to themselves and their teaching in this way. As it is presented in item 3 in the table, the supervisor asks questions to the TTs about their lesson plans and thus encourages critical reflection. For instance, as a post-activity, TT1 had used a song; the students had listened to the song and tried to write down the missing words in the lyrics. The supervisor realized that this post-activity was not suitable for that particular lesson and the students were unfamiliar with some of the words in the activity. During the feedback session with TT1, she asked her why she had decided to use a song as a post-activity and how she had decided on the words to ask the students to write down while listening. The reason for her asking this question was, in fact, to imply that the post activity should have been related to what she had taught in this particular lesson and the words in that activity should have been chosen according to her aim and the students' background knowledge. By helping the TT to identify a problem during the teaching activity, she attempted to have the TT to come up with her own solutions to teaching problems.

The supervisory behaviour which is based on alternative supervision, suggesting an alternative to what the TT has done in class, was also observed during the three feedback sessions. One example of this can be seen in the session with TT1. During her self-assessment, TT1 criticized herself about her ineffective use of the board and the supervisor provided two alternative ways of using the board more effectively. The supervisor provided the alternatives but did not favour any of the alternatives. The TT was allowed to exercise her individual choice.

The last supervisory behaviour in Table 1, providing models for appropriate behaviour, is based on directive supervision. An example of this behaviour was seen during the feedback session with TT3. In her lesson plan, TT2's objective was to teach the causative with the verbs "have, make, get and let", and as the objective was impossible to achieve in a 40-minute lesson with the students whose backgrounds were not suitable for that, there were several problems during her teaching. The supervisor talked about the objectives of the lesson and helped TT2 to become aware of this problem by asking questions. She then said that, considering the students' level and the time constraints, TT2 should have taught the causative by focusing on only one of the verbs.

The data from the feedback sessions were also analyzed to evaluate the feedback according to the conditions described in Brinko (ibid.). Table 2 below illustrates the conditions met during the feedback sessions.

**Table 2. Conditions met by the supervisor to make the feedback more effective**

1. Information was gathered from oneself as well as from others
2. It was given with a respectful, supportive, and empathic approach
3. It was conveyed in a variety of modes
4. It contained accurate data and irrefutable evidence, concrete information, and specific data
5. It contained models of appropriate behaviour
6. It considered the recipient's amount of experience and developmental stage
7. It was sensitive to the recipient's self-esteem
8. It was devoid of inflammatory language
9. It allowed for response and interaction

It can be seen in Table 2 that many conditions were met by the supervisor to make the feedback effective. As mentioned before, all the feedback sessions started with the TTs' self-assessment reports, which shows that feedback recipients were involved in the assessment and feedback from the self was valued. Secondly, the supervisor's respectful, supportive and emphatic approach helped the TTs to feel comfortable and prevented any defensive behaviour. An example to illustrate the supervisor's supportive approach can be found in the feedback session with TT1. When TT1 reported her not being able to answer a student's question about a vocabulary item as a weakness, the supervisor stated that was not a weakness and she herself sometimes experienced the same thing in her classes. This approach is also a proof for her sensitiveness to the TT's self-esteem. Another condition to make the feedback more effective was to convey it both verbally and in a written format. The supervisor's detailed notes about the observed lessons made it possible for her to have accurate, irrefutable, concrete and specific data. Suggesting TT2 that she should have taught the causative by focusing on only one of the verbs is an example of providing models of appropriate behaviour. Attributing the negative performances to the TTs amount of experience and developmental stage by using sentences such as "Of course, you will learn to manage this" or "You can do this when you gain some experience in teaching" while giving negative feedback was something that showed she considered the TTs' amount of experience and developmental stage during the supervision. Her feedback was also devoid of inflammatory language and she allowed for response and interaction during the sessions.

The third step in the analysis of the feedback sessions was to identify the areas mentioned by each TT and the supervisor about their strengths and weaknesses in that particular lesson and to find out whether there was a match or mismatch between areas in the TT's self-assessment and the supervisor's feedback. Table 3 illustrates the teaching areas mentioned by TT1 and the supervisor about the observed lesson.

**Table 3.** Areas mentioned by TT1 and the supervisor about the lesson

	By TT1	By the supervisor
Strengths mentioned		
Relating the lesson to real life	√	√
Involving all the students	√	√
Using body language effectively	√	√
Using the target language most of the time	√	
Giving clear instructions	√	
Getting immediate feedback from the students	√	
Not standing in front of the class for a long time	√	
Making eye contact with the students	√	
Using the students' names	√	
Having a good lesson plan	√	
Doing a good warm-up activity	√	√
Weaknesses mentioned		
Using the native language at some points	√	
Being unable to answer a student's question about vocabulary	√	
Problems with timing	√	
Using the board ineffectively	√	√
Not enough practice for grammar		√
Irrelevance of the post-activity		√

It can be seen in Table 3 that TT1 mentioned more areas than the supervisor. This shows that asking the TTs to write a self-assessment report stimulates reflection and in this way, they can develop reflective thinking, which requires critical thought. As stated by Tanner et al. (2000), the promotion of reflection is considered to be an important goal in teacher education, because it is assumed that reflection plays a major part in the development of teachers. However, TT2's self-assessment report was not as detailed as TT1. Table 4 presents the areas mentioned by TT2 and the supervisor.

**Table 4.** Teaching areas mentioned by TT2 and the supervisor

	By TT2	By the supervisor
Strengths mentioned		
Not having problems related to classroom management	√	
Having good interaction with the students		√
A good warm-up activity for the lesson		√
Relating the lesson to real life		√
Weaknesses mentioned		
Having objectives unsuitable to the students' level	√	√
Problems with timing	√	
Having objectives impossible to achieve in one lesson		√
Inappropriate examples to teach grammar correctly		√
Some grammar mistakes during grammar presentation		√
Lesson plan lacking details		√

It can be seen in Table 4 that TT2 could identify only one strong and two weak areas in her teaching, while the supervisor gave feedback about three strong and five weak teaching areas. It can be concluded that TT2 needs more opportunities to engage in reflective thinking and to develop into a reflective practitioner.

Table 5 gives information about the teaching areas mentioned by TT3 and the supervisor during the feedback session.

**Table 5.**Teaching areas mentioned by TT3 and the supervisor

	By TT3	By the supervisor
<b>Strengths mentioned</b>		
Having a good interaction with the students	√	
Suitable reading activity for the students' age and language level	√	
Helping and guiding the students while completing the task		
Asking questions which require higher level thinking	√	
Questions in the task are ranked according to difficulty level		√
Being successful in attracting the students' attention		√
Relating the lesson to real life		√
<b>Weaknesses mentioned</b>		
Being too nervous	√	
Lack of a warm-up activity	√	√
Problems with timing	√	
Not helping the students when they had difficulty in completing the task	√	√
Unclear instructions		√
Insufficient explanation for a word		√
Not enough number of questions		√
Not providing feedback to the students about their incorrect answers		√
Making a connection with the previous lessons		√

As it is displayed in Table 5, there is not a complete match between the areas mentioned by the supervisor and TT3. TT3 identified three strong areas and four weak areas in her teaching. On the other hand, the supervisor mentioned four strengths and seven weaknesses about the particular class she had taught. There is a match only in one of the weak areas mentioned, which was about the lack of a warm-up activity.

The conclusion we might draw from the findings above is that asking the TTs to write a self-assessment report promotes reflection and helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it brings an additional perspective to the process of supervision and the mismatch between the TTs' self-assessment and the supervisor's feedback, if there is one, can provide an opportunity for them to raise more issues during the feedback sessions. As presented in Brinko (ibid.), feedback is more effective when information is gathered from oneself as well as others and in any case, if the cognitive dissonance created by discrepancies between feedback recipients' self-ratings and feedback sources' assessments is not too large or too small, it is likely to facilitate a change in behaviour.

### Interviews

In the interviews, there were questions to find out the participants' views about supervision and the supervisor's approach to supervision. There were eight parallel questions to compare and contrast the views of the supervisor and the TTs. The results of the analysis of their responses to each question are presented below.

*Definition of supervision in language teaching:* The supervisor, TT1 and TT2 defined supervision as "guiding and helping the student teachers". However, according to TT3, supervision is "giving information about the appropriate teaching behaviours". Thus, the participants' definition of supervision shows a tendency to favour both directive and alternative approaches to supervision.

*The main purpose of supervision in language teaching:* According to the supervisor, the main purpose of supervision should be making the TT reflect on her teaching and raising her awareness. TT2 thinks the purpose should be guiding the TT and raising her awareness. TT1's and TT3's answers to this question are very similar in that they both believe the purpose of supervision should be to guide the TTs and to provide better alternatives to what they have done in class. Considering their responses to this

question, it can be said that there are four key points for the participants about the main purpose of supervision: reflection, awareness, guidance and alternatives.

*The duty of a supervisor:* Consistent with their responses to the previous question, for the supervisor and TT2, the duty of a supervisor is raising awareness and providing guidance. For TT1, on the other hand, it is both raising awareness and providing alternatives but leaving the decision to the TT. According to TT3, the supervisor has several duties such as providing the information, giving feedback about its application and the weaknesses of the TT. The responses to this question show that a supervisor is likely to have several duties.

*Expectations from a supervisor:* Since she had not asked them, the supervisor in this study did not know what the TTs expected from her as a supervisor but when she was asked this question, she wished she had asked them about their expectations and she thought the supervision process would have been more effective if she had known what they had expected from her. So, this study in a way helped her to be aware of the necessity of a pre-conference with each TT, which was also an issue mentioned by the TTs in their description of the best way to go about supervision.

When asked about their expectations from their supervisor, the TTs mostly mentioned the personal qualities of a good supervisor. This comment by TT3 illustrates this: “A supervisor should make me feel comfortable, should be cheerful, understanding and should empathize with me”. TT1 emphasized the importance of being friendly, critical, creative, having a problem-centred approach, offering alternative solutions to problems and helping the TT to become a better teacher. TT1 and TT3’s responses to this question are consistent with one of the conditions Brinko (ibid.) suggested to make the feedback more effective: being supportive, empathic and non-judgmental.

The only expectation of TT2 from the supervisor is raising her awareness. As it was seen in her self-assessment that TT2 mentioned only a few areas in her teaching, her response to this question shows that she is aware of her weakness in reflection on her teaching.

*Steps after the observation of the TTs’ classes:* In the case of the participants of this study, the supervisor observes the TTs’ lesson, assesses the lesson by the use of discrete criteria, and takes notes with concrete information and specific details. She does not give any feedback to the TTs immediately after the lesson. They arrange a date for the feedback session and she asks the TT to write a self-assessment report before the session. The session begins with the TT’s self-assessment and then the supervisor gives her feedback verbally, asks some questions during the session to encourage critical reflection and gives a written report to the TT after the session.

Brinko (ibid.) advocates immediate briefing to make the feedback more effective but according to a study by Williams & Watson (2004), there is some evidence of a higher level of reflective analysis by the student teacher in delayed briefings than in immediate briefings. While expressing their opinions about the best way to go about supervision, the TTs in this study emphasized the need for immediate feedback, at least for general comments of the supervisor before the feedback session in which their lesson is assessed using discrete criteria. This result shows the importance of being aware of the TTs’ expectations from the supervisor and providing space for their voices in decision making.

*Views about a match between the trainee teachers’ expectations from supervision and the supervisor’s approach to supervision:* The supervisor and the TTs agree that there should be a match between the TTs’ expectations from supervision and the supervisor’s approach to supervision. Since she does not know what the TTs expect from her, the supervisor does not know whether there is a match between the TTs’ expectations and her supervisory behaviours but she feels that there is. She states that she can easily make some changes in her behaviours if the TTs ask for a sound behavioural change in her approach.

The TTs believe that their expectations and the supervisor’s approach to supervision usually match but TT1 and TT2 emphasize that it is necessary to have a pre-conference with their supervisor about their expectations so that there would not be any mismatches.

TT1 and TT3 believe that a mismatch may cause some problems but TT2 does not think a mismatch may cause very important problems.

*The best way to go about supervision:* According to the supervisor, the best way to go about supervision has four stages: 1) a pre-conference to learn about the TTs' expectations, a stage which she has realized as important during the interview of the present study,

2) observation of teaching,

3) getting the mentor's opinions about the TT, and 4) having a feedback session with the TT.

However, the TTs' definitions of the best way to go about supervision are different from that of the supervisor's. TT1 describes a way with more stages: a pre-conference, in which the supervisor introduces herself, gives some information about the process, and tells some anecdotes about the practicum. In the second stage, the supervisor goes to the schools with the TTs and helps them to adapt to the environment. Then, she observes a class taught by the TT and gives feedback. Because the TT can be nervous during the first observation, she believes there must be a second observation and a feedback session to discuss the impact of feedback on the trainee's second lesson. The trainee should be graded according to the development between the two lessons and the supervisor, even if she cannot observe them again, should go on to keep in touch with the trainees and ask them whether they have any problems related to the practicum.

TT2 also thinks the supervision process should start with a pre-conference, in which the details about the lesson plan are discussed. The second stage is the observation and she believes immediate feedback without any details is necessary. After that, the TT should write a self-assessment report and a feedback session should be arranged. She thinks that there should be a second observation, if possible, to see the effects of the feedback on the trainee.

TT3 attracts the attention to the arrangement for the observations in advance as a first step. Then, there should be a pre-conference and the supervisor should inform the TTs about her expectations. The third stage is observation which should be followed by general immediate feedback. After that, the TT should write a self-assessment report and a feedback session should be held. Like TT1 and TT2, TT3 also thinks a second observation is necessary in order to see whether the feedback had any impact on the trainee's teaching.

As can be seen there are some similarities and differences between the participants' definitions of the best way to go about supervision. Because of time constraints and the heavy work load of the supervisor, some steps of the processes described by the TTs are too difficult to apply in this context. Since it was impossible for her to observe the TTs' classes as often as she had intended to, the supervisor in this study adopted peer coaching as a method to make the supervision process more beneficial to the TTs. Several studies showed that peer coaching was effective as a development tool. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Vacilotto & Cummings (2007) with pre-service ESL/EFL teachers indicate that peer coaching, which means sharing data collected peer observation as a means for reflection on individual teaching practices, facilitated exchange of teaching methods and materials, fostered development of teaching skills, and made participants rethink their own teaching methods and styles. Thus, it can be said to be an effective extra component in this context.

Another strategy that the supervisor used to make the process more beneficial was to ask the TTs to write a self-assessment report, which encouraged reflective thinking.

*Giving grades:* The supervisor uses a checklist with discrete criteria to assess the TTs' lessons, and except TT2, the TTs are aware of the criteria by which they are judged. Her approach is consistent with the findings of Leshem & Bar-Hama (2008) in that trainees need explicit criteria for effective teaching in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses and use them as guidelines for improvement. However, the supervisor stated that not all of the criteria are applicable while observing one lesson, so during her observation, she takes notes which contain concrete information and specific data about the lesson.

*Supervisory Behaviours:* The last question in the interview, in which the supervisor had to select from three answers, was asked to learn about her publicly proclaimed supervisory behaviours. She responded to this closed question by saying that her supervisory behaviours were a combination of choices a and c, which meant that she has some preconceived ideas about the trainee teachers' expectations from her as a supervisor and adopts a supervision model according to those ideas, and rather than adopting one single model, she selects the appropriate supervisory approach for different contexts and different trainee teachers. Considering her supervisory behaviours which were identified during the feedback sessions with

the TTs, it can be concluded that her proclaimed behaviours are consistent with her practice. In Argyris' terms (in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992), there is a consistency between her espoused theory (what she says she does) and her theory-in-use (what she actually does).

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate supervision in language teaching from a supervisor's and her three trainee teachers' perspectives. The results indicate that the supervisor's supervisory behaviours are based on a combination of supervision models and there are no inconsistencies between her espoused theory and theory-in-action about supervision. Analysis of the feedback sessions also shows that the supervisor meets a number of conditions to make her feedback more effective.

In addition, it was observed that there is not a complete match between the teaching areas mentioned by the TTs in their self-assessment reports and by the supervisor in her feedback about the observed lesson. This mismatch provided an opportunity for them to raise more issues during the feedback sessions. This finding attracts the attention to the necessity and importance of additional perspectives in supervision.

Finally, while describing their views about the best way to go about supervision, the TTs emphasized the necessity for pre-conference and frequent observations. They believe that a pre-conference with the supervisor is necessary in order to learn what they are expected to do and how they will be assessed. Since the goal of feedback is to improve the effectiveness of teaching, they think that the supervisor should observe them again after the feedback session to see if there are any changes in their teaching behaviour so that they can recognize the impact of supervision on their professional growth.

This study, which provides a deeper understanding and insights into supervision in language teaching, support the claim that teacher educators should collaborate with the TTs and provide some space for their voices to assure that the supervision process is useful to them while preparing to enter the real world of teaching.

*Eda Kahyalar, Ph.D., is an instructor at Foreign Language Education Center at Cukurova University, Turkey. Her areas of interests include corrective feedback in L2 writing, teacher education, individual differences in adult second language learning.*

Email: [ekahyalar@cu.edu.tr](mailto:ekahyalar@cu.edu.tr)

*İlkay Çelik Yazıcı, Ph.D., is an instructor at Foreign Language Education Center at Cukurova University, Turkey. She is interested in L2 writing, second language acquisition process and teacher education.*

Email: [ilkay\\_celik@yahoo.com](mailto:ilkay_celik@yahoo.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Another version of this study was presented at International Journal of Arts and Sciences Conference in Prague in 2012.

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, K. M. (2006). *Language Teacher Supervision: A Case-Based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhargava, A. (2009). Teaching practice for student teachers of B.ED programme. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education. TOJDE*, 10/2: 101-108.
- Brinko, K. T. (1993). 'The practice of giving feedback to improve teaching: What is effective?' *Journal of Higher Education* 64/5: 575-93.
- Cogan, M. (1973). *Clinical Supervision*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Freeman, D. (1982). Observing teachers: Three approaches to in-service training and development. *TESOL Quarterly* 16: 21-8.
- Hascher, T., Cocard, Y. & Moser, P. (2004). 'Forget about theory- practice is all? Student teachers' learning in practicum'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 10/6: 623-37.
- Leshem, S. & Bar-Hama, R. (2008). 'Evaluating teaching practice'. *ELT Journal* 62/3: 257-65.
- O'Neal, E. M. (2008). Middle School Teachers' Understandings of Supervision: Exploring Feedback for Professional Growth in Teacher Performance and Student Achievement. PhD Dissertation, Wilmington University.
- Richards J. C. & D. Nunan (Eds.) (1990). *Second Language Teacher Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roberts, J. (1998). *Language Teacher Education*. Great Britain: Arnold.
- Tanner, R., Longayroux, D., Beijaard, D. & Verloop, N. (2000). 'Piloting portfolios: using portfolios in pre-service teacher education'. *ELT Journal* 54/1: 20-30.
- Vacilotto, S. & Cumminngs, R. (2007). 'Peer coaching in TEFL/TESL programmes'. *ELT Journal* 61/2: 153-60.
- Wallace, M. (1991). *Training Foreign Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, M. & Watson, A. (2004). 'Post-lesson debriefing: Delayed or immediate? An investigation of student teacher talk'. *Journal of Education for Teaching* 30/2: 85-96.
- Zeichner, K. M. (1990). 'Changing directions in the practicum: looking ahead to the 1990s'. *Journal of Education for Teaching* 16/2: 105-32.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O. (1992). *Professional Development in Higher Education*. Kogan Page, London.