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## How Turkish Pre-Service Teachers Perceive Good Reader

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### Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore how Turkish pre-service teachers perceived good reader. With this aim, the study used cross-sectional survey design and the study sample consisted of total 128 pre-service teachers majoring social studies, science, elementary classroom, and Turkish language arts teaching from a public university in Turkey's Kirsehir province. The informed consent letters obtained from all the subjects before the study began. For collecting the data, an inventory was used. The inventory was administered to all the subjects. The data obtained from the process were analyzed and the findings were presented in respond to research aims. According to these results, the conclusions were drawn and some recommendations fitted with the results and conclusions were made for future research.

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### 1. Introduction

A classroom is a complex setting in which teachers and students explore, negotiate, and assemble knowledge and beliefs of their environments by means of continuing epistemological processes (as cited in Simmons et al., 1999).

Especially, there is strong evidence showing that beliefs held by teachers are one of the underlying factors of effective classroom practices. Teachers do not only transmit knowledge to students but also facilitate students' learning by supporting students to actively construct knowledge. That's why, teachers' beliefs play critical role in teaching and learning activities in classroom settings (Walker, Brownlee, Whiteford, Exley, & Woods; 2012).

More than last two decades, research on teachers' beliefs has received much attention from educators. Many educators agree that teacher s' beliefs may affect teachers' instructional practice (Nespor 1987; Pjares, 1992). Research on teachers' beliefs has thus become one of the major concerns for studies of teaching and teacher education (as cited in Tsai, 2002).

As stated (Deemer, 2004; as cited in Pjares, 1992), teacher beliefs' influence their classroom practices and understanding the beliefs of the in-service and pre-service teachers are necessary to improve their preparation and teaching practices. A great deal of empirical evidence has argued the importance of beliefs for understanding teacher beliefs (e.g., Ertmer, 2005; Kagan, 1992; Pjares, 1992; Simmons et al., 1999). In defining this relationship between teacher behaviors and beliefs, Pajares articulated that "Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which in turn, affect their behavior in classroom..." (Pjares, 1992, p. 307). Kagan

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(1992) also contented that “empirical studies have yielded quite consistent findings: A teacher’s beliefs tend to be associated with a congruent style of teaching that is often evident across different classes and grade levels” (p.6).

According to Nespor (1987), beliefs systems, unlike knowledge systems, do not need general or group consensus concerning the validity and appropriateness of their beliefs. By contrast, knowledge systems are open to evaluation and critical examination. He also argued that beliefs more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior.

The study of Ernest (1989) investigated the effects of teachers’ knowledge on teaching practices in learning setting and concluded that two teachers may have similar knowledge but teach in different ways. He recommended the powerful effect of beliefs is more useful in understanding and predicting how teachers make decisions.

Given the information about importance of teacher beliefs in classroom practices, explained above, we would say that it is important to uncover how teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning influence their instructional practices.

Therefore, this study attempted to provide more information by investigating how Turkish pre-service teachers perceive good reader. With this overall aim of the present study, we specifically addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the preferences of the pre-service teachers about good reader?
2. Are there significant differences among the pre-service teachers’ preferences about good reader?

## **2. Method**

### *1.1. Subjects*

This research took place in fall semester, 2012, in Turkey’s Kirsehir province. This study was conducted in a public university in Turkey’s Kirsehir province with the pre-service teachers enrolled in a four-year teacher preparation program. The sample was composed of 128 pre-service teachers, aged from 18 to 22 who were studying different teacher education programs, including elementary and middle content (social studies, science, and Turkish language arts). The pre-service teachers were from different course-year.

### *2.2. Instrumentation*

#### *2.2.1. Good reader perception inventory*

In this research, an inventory was used to determine how the pre-service teachers view good reader. In the inventory, the pre-service teachers were asked to identify three factors among six in the list, defining good reader. According to the inventory, we asked the pre-service teachers to think of someone they know who is a good reader. Then, the pre-service teachers were asked to choose what they think is the #1 characteristic from those listed. Once the pre-service teachers chose one, they marked it as #1, then they chose what he or she thinks is the next (2<sup>nd</sup>) most important characteristic of a good reader and marked the item chosen as #2. Then, they chose what he or she thinks is the next (3<sup>rd</sup>) most important characteristic of a good reader and marked the item chosen as #3. There were six items about good reader in the inventory. For the scoring process, the item that was rated “1” was given 3 points. The item rated “2” by the pre-service teachers was given 2 points. The item rated “3” was given 1 point and all other items in the inventory were scored as “0” point. The items about good reader perception were as follows:

1. Good readers read a lot.
2. Good readers read fast.
3. Good readers understand what they read.
4. Good readers are able to read all the words correctly in what they read.
5. Good readers read out loud with good expression when they read.
6. Good readers like to read.

### 3. Findings

#### Pre-Service Teachers' views about how they perceive good reader

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation scores of pre-service teachers' views about how they perceive good reader

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
item1	128	.46	.81
item2	128	.19	.63
item3	128	2.45	.92
item4	128	1.09	1.00
item5	128	.91	.99
item6	128	1.07	1.12

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore whether or not the pre-service teachers' views about good reader differed from each other significantly. The pre-service teachers were divided into sixth different groups according to their preferences about perception of good reader. There was a statistically significant according to the teachers' preferences about perception of good reader  $F(5, 762) = 91.596, p = .000$ . The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .37. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD indicated that the mean score for the item3 ( $M = 2.45, SD = .92$ ) was significantly different from item1, item2, item4, item5, and item6 [ $(M = .46, SD = .81), (M = .19, SD = .63), (M = 1.09, SD = 1.00), (M = .91, SD = .99), (M = 1.07, SD = 1.12)$ ] respectively. The mean score for the item4 ( $M = 1.09, SD = 1.00$ ) was significantly different from item1 and item2 [ $(M = .46, SD = .81), (M = .19, SD = .63)$ ] respectively. The mean score for the item5 ( $M = .91, SD = .99$ ) was significantly different from item1 and item2 [ $(M = .46, SD = .81), (M = .19, SD = .63)$ ] respectively. The mean score for the item6 ( $M = 1.07, SD = 1.12$ ) was significantly different from item1 and item2 [ $(M = .46, SD = .81), (M = .19, SD = .63)$ ] respectively.

### 4. Conclusion

In the study, we aimed to explore Turkish pre-service teachers' perceptions about good readers. To determine the pre-service teachers' perceptions about good readers, we used the one-way analysis of variance. The research findings revealed that there were significant differences among the pre-service teachers' perceptions ( $p < .001$ ). The most rated or preferred item by the pre-service teachers was "Good readers understand what they read." Subsequently, the item entitled "Good readers are able to read all the words correctly in what they read.", the other item entitled "Good readers like to read.", and another one entitled "Good readers read out loud with good expression when they read." were rated or preferred mostly by the pre-service teachers respectively. According to these results, it would be argued that the pre-service teachers focused on reading comprehension process for becoming good reader or proficient reader in their perceptions. This perception of the pre-service teachers was also consistent with the previous studies conducted on what the characteristics of good reader are. These studies also have contended that the focus in reading instruction requires including effective approaches which will create self-regulating, strategic reader for reading comprehension process (e.g., Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Johnson, 2005). We would infer from these results and literature related to good reader that most of the pre-service teachers in the present study would give more attention to teaching comprehension skills to students in their professional life. As we state before in this paper, teacher beliefs are important factors affecting their instructional practices in classroom settings. It would be drawn that the pre-service teachers who defined good readers as "Good readers understand what they read." would focus on teaching effective strategies for comprehension skills more than the pre-service teachers who preferred the other items in the inventory. Because of this, it can be given more consideration to teaching the skills good readers have in teacher education programs.

Taken account of the present study findings in respond to the research questions, it would be argued that the present research provides strong insights into the way the pre-service teachers view good reader. We hope that the

present study will provide an impetus and gateway to more comprehensive research on good reader perceptions of teacher in Turkey.

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