

Values Education in Foreign Language Curriculum through the Eyes of Pre-Service Teachers

Abstract

Values education aims to internalize societal norms in individuals to help them display acceptable social behaviors. This study uses the phenomenological method to investigate Turkish pre-service English teachers' views about values education in English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum. Qualitative data obtained through survey and interviews was subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers held positive opinions about incorporating values into the EFL curriculum. They considered values such as friendship, respect, kindness, love, justice and honesty important for primary children to acquire. They also expressed willingness to facilitate children's acquisition of such values in their future profession.

Key words: Curriculum; Pre-service teachers; Values education

Corresponding Author

Yasemin Kırkgöz, Prof. Dr., Çukurova University
Education Faculty, Foreign Languages Department-01100/Adana-Turkey
e-mail: ykirkgoz@gmail.com Phone: (+90) 5326103299

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Introduction

The term value is defined in many different ways. Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) provide a definition of the term as cognitive reflections of universal human needs. In relation to the properties of value, Schwartz (1994) points out that value is a concept or belief; values direct desired behaviors, and they differ in their importance. A comprehensive definition of value is given by Johnston (2003):

The beliefs which help a person decide what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. Beliefs are both individual and social. They are individual in that all values are expressed by and through particular people... but strong social forces affect individual beliefs. As a result, values only become interesting when they are put into practice in social settings – when our inner beliefs are converted into actions that affect others. (p.6)

As implied in the above definitions, values are abstract concepts that determine the importance of societal norms. Values are the principles that guide people's lives, and they are used to judge and evaluate actions (Knafo & Schwartz, 2004). Values can be ideas, principles, rules, activities and practices that people accept, prefer and consider important (Aspin, 2007).

Importance of Values Education

Instilling the values and morals of a given society in students has always been an integral component of formal education (Beldağ, 2016). However, it was not until recent decades that values education emerged as a specific set of objectives to be developed in students alongside academic competencies. The main aim of values education is to influence students to internalize societal norms to help them socialize and practice acceptable or appropriate behavior. Values education also helps develop individuals' perception of various social responsibilities that influence their decisions and actions (Thornberg, 2008). Values are taken as a basis in the socialization of individuals, in facilitating their adaptation to society and regulating their social relations.

When values are considered as the source of social well-being and provided at schools as one of the fundamental topics in a democratic society, it is important to teach them as a separate course in the school curriculum, or to incorporate them into the existing courses (Contreras, 2007; Iskos, Francisco, & Gegiou, 2019). Through values education, learners are expected to become responsible, tolerant and motivated citizens as well as being successful in life on an individual level. On a societal level, on the other hand, they are expected to develop

awareness of the impact of their actions on the wider community to ensure a more sustainable world (Hidayati, Zaim, & Darmansya, 2014).

In light of this information, common values such as responsibility, respect, self-control, compassion, cooperation, justice, courage, honesty, kindness, loyalty, and friendship should be taken as basis in the value education programs provided in schools. Internalizing such values supports the moral and character development of children, making them grow as sensitive and responsible individuals (Dinç, 2011).

A number of researchers examined pre-service teachers' as well as the practicing teachers' opinions about values education in different educational domains in Turkish context (Bartan, 2018; Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli, & Çıkılı, 2008; Kurtdede Fidan, 2009). In a qualitative study using interviews, Bartan (2018) investigated 10 pre-school teachers' views on values and values education at a northwestern Turkish university. The study revealed that teachers welcomed values education in the school curriculum and benefited from visual materials, drama and stories in the process of developing values in children. In addition, teachers gave a number of suggestions; values education should start at an early age, and the list of values to be developed in children should explicitly be stated in the preschool education curriculum.

In a large-scale study with 637 pre-service teachers attending the education faculty at a central Turkish university, Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli and Çıkılı (2008) explored the value perceptions of prospective teachers in terms of different variables. The Schwartz Values List and personal information form was used in the study. As a result, a significant difference was found in the value perception of the prospective teachers in terms of gender variable.

In a related study, Kurtdede Fidan (2009) examined value perceptions of pre-service teachers. A total of 206 prospective teachers from the Primary Education and Social Studies Teaching program at a northwestern Turkish university participated in the study. A value teaching scale of activities was used to elicit the pre-service teachers' opinions about teaching values. The majority of participants stated that the most important issue in values education was not only to teach values but to get the children to actually fulfil values in real life.

Similar outcomes have been reported in other studies. For instance, Kılıç Şahin (2010), using interviews, reported the views of 22 teachers teaching Social Studies courses in primary school students about developing values in children. The teachers defined values as the norms accepted by the society, which give direction to the behaviors of individuals. Furthermore, most of the teachers found it appropriate to include values in the program for a number of reasons: it prepares children with a strong personality for future; it prevents the value corruption and leads to becoming good citizens. In the process of value teaching, teachers defined their role as a role model and used role playing, drama and brainstorming activities. They noted that the family is the most significant institution to instill values in children. Most teachers found it beneficial to develop values because it leads to permanent learning in primary school children. Teachers added that children should internalize values and behave accordingly.

As seen from the existing studies outlined above, values education is specifically addressed in Turkey in the context of the Social Studies curriculum. However, studies investigating values education in the EFL curriculum remain limited. Kırkgöz (2019a) carried out a study to identify values in the currently used primary school second grade English textbook. It was found that such core values as “showing respect to others, being kind and helpful, greeting, being tolerant and fair” were the underlined values in the textbook activities. In other studies, Kırkgöz (2019b; 2020) explored the pre-service English teachers’ opinions about values education in the Primary EFL curriculum, showing that pre-service teachers supported the idea of incorporating values in the EFL curriculum; they developed an awareness of values education in the EFL curriculum and identified different types of values in the teaching materials.

Values education has also been studied comprehensively in international context. Contreras (2007), for example, reported how student’s behavior and attitudes had changed after incorporating values into the English curriculum. The study, conducted with sixth and seventh graders in a public school in Colombia, demonstrated that students became aware of their responsibilities to comply with social rules when the content of the English class was related to values. Similarly, Brackett et al., (2011) found that communicating values contributed to keeping a positive classroom environment and improved students’ classroom behavior in which students used polite words, worked cooperatively and assisted others. Iskos, Francisco and Gegiou (2019) reported English teachers’ experiences with respect to the values that were integrated into the ELT curriculum in a private primary school in Greece. It was concluded that teaching values such as respect, compassion, cooperation, and caring through classroom discussions and individual and group projects created positive behaviors on the students. Many students stated that they started to help their mother at home with some household chores such as cleaning or setting the table and showed kindness towards their grandparents and feeling pride about it.

Values Education in the EFL Curriculum

Values play an important role in promoting learning process. In foreign language, the effect is even greater than it is in teaching other subjects. Therefore, the role of values in second and foreign language teaching (EFL/ESL) and learning should not be underestimated. As remarked by Hall (2010), teachers pass on values all the time, often unconsciously. In this sense, the EFL classroom may serve as a natural setting for values learning. Values education can be given either by an independent course, or through integrating values into an existing course in the school curriculum. In Turkey, values education was incorporated into the foreign language curriculum by the Turkish Ministry of National Education’s (MEB) foreign language curriculum renewal in 2017. Key values in the EFL curriculum document are stated in terms of 10 values, given below:

The key values that should be transferred to the learners in line with the learning outcomes are: friendship, justice, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism and altruism. However, these values should not be considered as a separate entity. They should be embedded into the themes and topics of the syllabi. Stakeholders such as teachers and material designers should take learners' ages, psychological and sociological levels into consideration in selecting characters, texts, visuals to be used during the instruction process. (MEB, 2018, p. 6).

Becoming familiar with the values education is crucial for prospective teachers of English. With this in mind, the present study aims to investigate the opinions of pre-service teachers about values in the EFL curriculum. The study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What are the pre-service teachers' opinions about values education in general?
- 2) What do pre-service teachers think about incorporating values into the foreign language curriculum?
- 3) What values do pre-service teachers consider important to teach through English in their future practice, and in what ways?

Method

In the present study, the phenomenological method, one type of qualitative research, was employed to describe the perception of pre-service English teachers with reference to values education in general, and values in the EFL curriculum in particular from various aspects. Creswell (2013) defines phenomenology as “an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group (p. 75). The rationale for employing phenomenological research as a qualitative inquiry was to identify “the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants in a study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 245).

Participants

The current study was conducted as part of the English Curriculum course at a Teacher Education program of a state university in southern Turkey. The English Curriculum is a two-credit course which is offered during the spring semester in the second year of the program. The participants were 38 pre-service teachers; 26 female and 12 male, whose ages ranged from 21-23.

Data Collection

In the phenomenological study a combination of interviews, documents and surveys are typically used to collect data. Similarly, in the present study data were collected from all of the 38 pre-service teachers attending the English Curriculum course in the spring term of the

2019-2020 academic year. Convenience sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling in which participants are sampled, was used in the study mainly because they are convenient sources of data due to easy accessibility to the researcher (Taherdoost, 2016).

Procedures and Data Analysis

A three-stage procedure was adopted in conducting the study. In the first stage of the study, participants examined the Primary EFL curriculum in order to determine what values were referred to explicitly in the curriculum document (MEB, 2018). In the next stage, the primary English textbooks were evaluated critically to determine what values were provided explicitly or implicitly through different activities and tasks. Having thus become familiar with the values and the type of values in the textbooks, in the final stage of the study, the participants were asked to express their opinions about values in the EFL curriculum using an open-ended survey and semi-structured interviews.

The participants responded to the questions on a printed copy of the survey. They were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained. The survey comprised two sections. The first section intended to obtain information on the participants' age and gender. The second section elicited the participants' perspectives on values education through five open-ended questions, which were developed by the researcher in light of the existing literature and in line with research objectives. Both survey and interview questions were piloted on a different group of pre-service teachers to ensure that the data collection tools operate effectively (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, to ensure the validity of the data collection tools, five expert opinions were consulted, and the necessary changes were made based on the feedback received.

The participants were asked to respond to the following five questions:

1. What do you think about values education in general?
2. What do you think about values in the foreign language curriculum?
3. What do you think are the most important values for the primary children to acquire through English?
4. Would you be interested to develop children's acquisition of values in your future profession?
5. In what ways would you practice values in your future English classes?

In order to gain further understandings of pre-service teachers' perspectives, individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with 12 volunteer participants who had indicated their willingness to participate in the interview through the survey. The interviews, approximately 15 minutes in length, were conducted in English, with each teacher candidate; they were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. In line with the objective of the study, the participants were asked five semi-structured questions that were also coherent with the

statements in the survey. The participants were provided prompts to elaborate, clarify and give detailed responses (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data from the survey and the interview transcripts was carried out separately using qualitative descriptive design. Sandelowski (2000) notes that in descriptive qualitative studies, researchers present comprehensive summaries of a phenomenon or of events by listening to the participants' narratives and then classifying them into categories. Accordingly, the participants' responses to each open-ended survey questions were read several times by the researcher in order to obtain a general understanding of the information. They were then reviewed for relevant concepts and patterns as recommended by Patton (2015). This analysis was repeated for each open-ended question. For anonymity, the participants were represented with different codes such as P1 (Participant 1), 'P2 (Participant 2), and so on.

Interviews were transcribed and participants' responses to interview questions were recorded. The interview transcripts were first read thoroughly, and the method described above was applied to analyzing the qualitative data from the interviews. To ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative data both inter- and intra-rater reliability were applied. First, to achieve inter-rater reliability and reduce researcher bias, an expert ELT researcher who was not involved in the study, was asked to analyze survey and the interview data. For intra-rater reliability, the researcher reviewed the whole survey and the interview data after one month had passed from the initial analysis. In light of all these, all of the categories were checked again and finalized. The formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the inter- and intra-coder reliability, which involved dividing, the number of agreements into the sum of the agreements and disagreements in coding. The inter-coder reliability was found to be 0.9 and 0.97 whereas the intra-coder reliability was calculated as 0.91, which indicates a high consistency between the raters. The analysis of the qualitative data can be stated to be systematic and objective. After completing the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the survey and interviews, they were interpreted, and the results are reported in the following section. The interview data offered complementary data source for connections to the survey data (Marshall, & Rossman, 2011).

Results

In this section, research findings are presented in accordance with each research question. Relevant excerpts from the survey and interview data are given to illustrate pre-service teachers' opinions in relation to values in the foreign language curriculum. Finally, some activity types that are anticipated to be used by the participants are presented to illustrate how these prospective language teachers plan to instill values through English for children in their future profession.

Pre-service Teachers' Opinions about Values Education

Findings revealed that pre-service teachers considered values important for children to acquire at primary education and even earlier. They stated that values such as showing respect to others, being kind and helpful, greeting, being tolerant, honest and fair are important values that children should acquire, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

From very young age, children can learn to have a positive outlook on how they see life. Acquiring values can help them a lot in this process. For example, through practicing gratitude, children can experience how people are interconnected with each other. In this way, children can strengthen relationships, develop greater social understanding, and get mutual help during hard times. (P25)

Participants also agreed that internalizing values make children feel happier and more satisfied citizens in society. Hence, children can display *acceptable or appropriate behaviors thanks to values education*. The following excerpt echoes the opinion of most participants:

When a child is aware of values, he or she is better able to lead a happier and more satisfying life. Also, he or she will definitely have a more meaningful life; a life that has a higher sense of purpose. Every child needs to be aware of values to become a "human". Living with values is a necessity, not a choice. (P24).

Pre-service Teachers' Opinions about Values in the EFL Curriculum

Similar to the responses given above, findings also revealed positive views participants held concerning the Turkish Ministry of National Education's decision to integrate values into the EFL curriculum. The participants' responses revealed the emergence of four main concepts: *gaining socially acceptable behaviors, permanency effect, contextualized learning, and reinforcing effect*.

Gaining socially acceptable behaviors

Participants agreed that acquiring values through English would provide children with an opportunity to internalize socially acceptable behaviors. They believed that values such as showing respect to others, being kind and helpful, greeting, being tolerant, honest and fair were important values that children should acquire. Below are some excerpts reflecting the participants' views.

Children in primary education should be supported to acquire values. The foreign language can be a useful medium through which children can acquire values not only for academic purposes but also for daily life. (P3)

Primary school children should be taught many values because we believe that the earlier the children learn values the earlier that they will display good behaviors towards their surroundings, communities, and their country. (P11)

The participants considered facilitating primary children's value acquisition through English a great idea. They also thought that the English language creates a fun and easy way to acquire values because the foreign language curriculum is action-oriented, which makes children get a chance to learn the values through experiencing them with meaningful activities. This opinion is explicitly remarked in the following extracts:

I think while learning values through English, children do not only learn English they also learn fundamental things for the community. Teaching values properly can have positive effects on children. (P16)

We believe that acquiring values through English is crucial. For example, while teaching the English version of requesting, telling children when and where to use such expressions provides them the ability to acquire the values respect and kindness. (P6)

Permanency effect

Facilitating children's acquisition of values through English is thought to be the best way to teach both the target language and the values. It is mentioned that English teachers, by the very nature of their course content, transmit values unconsciously. When children gain values through English, it becomes more permanent in mind, as illustrated in the excerpt below:

Teaching values through any course is always going to be useful, especially to children at early ages. Teaching them through English not only achieves that goal but also makes the activities or dialogues more authentic. As values are already taught through other courses, students learn the values easier and remember them better. (P18)

Teaching values through English activities is extremely necessary, in my opinion. Teaching children values without them knowing or realizing is much more effective and useful in the first place. (P8)

Reinforcing effect

Participants noted that although students gain some values from different courses, such as science and history, it would not be as effective as learning it through English. Teaching English gives them a chance to reinforce what they have already learned and would add more to their repertoire of values as it requires participation in different activities and encourages students to socialize. Even though children might not realize those values at the moment, they would still learn something subconsciously and build a better character.

It can be very useful to teach children values through English, because in this way, children reinforce what they have been taught about values by their teachers and parents in their daily lives, consciously or unconsciously. Since English is different from their own language, they need to pay special attention to values. (P4)

Contextualized learning

As stated earlier, participants in the present study examined primary English textbooks used in terms of values presented explicitly or implicitly through different tasks and activities. The role of context is highlighted by Johnston (2003) as

context is crucial in understanding the interplay of values in language classrooms - in other words, the interface between abstract, general values that we hold (“respect students,” be fair”) and the things we say and do in the classroom is extremely complex and almost always indirect (p.115).

A further advantage of gaining values in English lessons, as perceived by the participants in the present study, was that values are contextualized through all kinds of entertaining tasks in English textbooks, giving children an opportunity to acquire values in a contextualized form rather than an isolated way.

If we tried to teach children those values in an isolated form, not only would it be a waste of time, but it would also make the learning process hard and boring for the children. So in order to speed up that process and save time, and make it enjoyable for the students, we shouldn't think of those two things separately. This way, both the tasks and the values will have more meaning for the children. (P 32)

When children learn values through the tasks in their English textbooks, values become contextualized for them, thus they can be more willing to acquire these values since they will look more appealing to them. It is a pleasant opportunity to include values in the activities so both language learning and acquiring the values can happen simultaneously. Not only does it save time, but it would make both of these aims more meaningful for children. (P 28)

The participants agreed that through the activities performed in the classroom children will slowly start to notice the values hidden in the tasks of their textbooks. “*Not only that the values are hidden, it is just that their main focus is the task itself so, at the earlier stages, they might not even realize the underlying values. When this realization happens, they see that their learning is supported by all those values*”. (P4) This is illustrated with reference to an activity in which “children are asked to respond to simple instructions given by the teachers”. They stated that such an activity helps develop children’s respect for the teacher and follow the commands, accordingly.

Pre-service Teachers Consideration of Values in their Future Profession

Participants expressed their belief in the importance of children to gain values through English and they unanimously agreed that they would undoubtedly instill values in English classes in their future profession. The participants' perspectives are illustrated in the following excerpts:

Today, in the fast-changing world, it has become very essential for a child to learn the best things in life. One such thing is values that lay the foundation for him/her to become a better human being. Instilling values start at a very early age. Schools prepare children to cope up with the real challenges of the world by imparting valuable lessons during the early years of education. (P6)

Primarily, the values I think the students should have are friendship, honesty, freedom, and empathy because I believe the earlier they have these better students they will be in the future. (P29)

It was also explained that though values may be hard to develop in children, they are important and should be taught at the right age. *“One needs to understand that it is not about who is responsible for teaching the right values to the children, but what are the core values that children need to learn in primary education.” (P24)* As for the types of values primary children should internalize, it was mentioned that

Children of primary school age should certainly learn friendship, honesty, love, responsibility, honesty, and respect values. Because if they learn these values at that age, it will probably be permanent. Also, these values are easier to learn for the students at that age. As they grow, they should learn other values as well. (P16)

The most frequently referred to value that children should acquire at primary education was friendship. Learning to make friends, but above all to know how to take care of friends and to keep friendship were considered very important by the participants of the present study, as illustrated in the following interview extract:

Friendship should be one of the first values that we should teach to our students because our students learn inside the classroom and respecting and getting along with their peers is one of the first things to maintain a healthy classroom. We should teach the value friendship as soon as we start teaching children something. (P6)

Respect is the next most frequently referred to value. Participants mentioned that respect is another most needed value in today's world that children should gain to lead a peaceful life. The following extract illustrates the importance of developing this value for children:

One should always respect their elderly; children should also learn to listen to and not interrupt between conversations. They should be taught good manners and also to feel empathy and accept others' opinions. Children should be taught to put themselves in other people's shoes. Not being able to accept differences and respecting people who are different is something that our world suffers from today. We should explain to our students that without differences everything would be the same and we should teach them to appreciate differences along with respecting them. (P8)

Kindness is the next most frequently mentioned value. Participants mentioned that kindness is a value that is learned, not inherited. One participant mentioned that *"Children should learn to be kind to those around them, it is important for children to be nice and gentle"*. (P31). For another participant *"Teaching a child the value of kindness means encouraging him/her to help others, caring about others, putting others' needs first then self"*. (P26). Kindness was thought to be one of the most positive attributes that a child should develop.

Honesty is identified as the next most frequently mentioned value. Participants stated that children must be taught that dishonesty and cheating are wrong, and that children should be made aware of the value of being honest and the consequences of lying. They should be taught to always aim at telling the truth from a very early age. One participant mentioned that *"Every school encourages students to be honest regardless of whatever mistakes have been committed by them"*. The same participant added that *"As a student, one would only be hurting himself/herself by cheating because this action would result in bad consequences"*.

Love is another most important value referred to by the participants. They reported that children naturally bear a loving nature but to make this an integral part of children's life, this particular value needs to be nurtured and developed from the very early age. One participant highlighted that *"It is very crucial for children to understand that love is not just for the family. Love involves showing compassion for their classmates, teachers, animals and everyone in the society"*. (P23)

Courage is identified as the next most important value referred to by the participants. It was highlighted that *"children should be taught to speak up and stand up for themselves, no matter even if they are at fault"*. Another participant mentioned that *"Children should be encouraged to speak up on their wrongdoings and learn to avoid them in the future"*.

Finally, pre-service teachers referred to such values as justice, self-esteem, responsibility, determination, and patriotism, acquisition of which they believed is indispensable to be trustworthy citizens. With reference to all the values explained so far one participant stated that *"To me, children should have these "core values" at first. Then, they should have other values"*. Most participants agreed that such values should be transferred to children at primary ages as they are important in every aspect of life. They believed that it becomes hard to gain those values after some age because *"Unfortunately, bad personality traits*

such as disrespect, irresponsibility and dishonesty may become very hard to change. Without teaching these values, children would grow up to be inadequate citizens.” (P8)

With regard to how pre-service teachers would develop children’s acquisition of values in their future profession, it was mentioned that most children at primary school age would not be able to understand some abstract values. They believed that they would still try to instill values in children through various contextualized activities and tasks to be illustrated in the following section.

The most preferred activity types included role plays, various language tasks supported with visuals, games and scenarios. Role-playing was thought to be the most useful way to teach both the language and value. One participant noted that *“The more active and feeling the better learning! would help children to internalize values”*. Below are some practical examples where the value is demonstrated, whether through real people and situations or fictional characters and settings:

I’d make my students role-play to teach for example how to say sorry. I’d make them act out a situation in the classroom to make that value become permanent for the children. I’d also give them a situation that they are supposed to overcome and ask them to play it out as a group in the class. (P31)

As an example of how to transfer values in English, I can give courtesy words such as thanking, apologizing, using "please" when necessary. In this way, children would acquire and practice respect and politeness values. (P19)

Participants maintained that children could be helped to gain values through the help of activities. While playing games, they would practice values such as cooperation, friendship, and helpfulness. While reading or writing, they would focus on the subject and gain many values consciously or unconsciously. With simple instructions given to children such as “close the door”, “sit down” and “get up”, children can be taught to follow the teacher’s instructions, in this way they would practice the value “respect”. In the following examples, participants highlight how values that might appear to be abstract can be made more concrete for children with the help of contextualized games and activities.

Teaching children favorite foods of some common animals will encourage them to feed animals. While learning both the names of the animals and foods, they will acknowledge which animal likes to eat what, so the next time they see that animal, they will recall that activity and want to feed that animal. This can happen by the teacher's implementation of talking about how important it is to care for the animals during the task. (P8)

If I were to design an activity that aims to teach responsibility and thoughtfulness; I’d organize a class visit. Values can be a little abstract and difficult for children to understand. Organizing a class visit, for example, to a local homeless shelter

or nursing home can help children see the importance of the values they're learning, while also giving them the opportunity to put what they've learned into practice. (P17)

To conclude, pre-service teachers were of the opinion that trying out the above-mentioned activities and many others through the medium of English language would help children to internalize values in a more authentic manner. The primary children would start to notice the hidden or the obvious values through well-designed tasks and activities. When this realization happens, children would see that their learning is supported by all those values and they would start to take responsibility for their actions, respecting and helping others, developing love and friendship with their classmates, and so on. It is also explained that it is challenging but not an unattainable target to facilitate children's acquisition of core values thanks to the provision of different activities, games, situations, role playing and various other activities that draw attention to children in an implicit manner. In doing so, the materials they will prepare will serve to reinforce the targeted values while simultaneously developing students' language skills at a grade-appropriate level.

Discussion

In relation to the first research question which aimed to elicit participants' opinions about values education in general, pre-service teachers agreed that values acquisition should be an integral part of education at primary education and even earlier. Internalizing core values such as respect, greeting, being kind, helpful, tolerant, honest, and fair were considered important in order for children to gain acceptable or appropriate behavior in society. In this way, children would have a stronger relationship and develop a greater social understanding with others in society.

Related to the second research question of the study, which aimed to identify pre-service teachers' opinions about values in the foreign language curriculum, all participants expressed their support to integrating values into the foreign language curriculum by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Four main reasons were put forward by the participants. It was agreed that teaching values through English would fundamentally help children gain socially acceptable behaviors, supporting the views of a number of scholars (See Bartan, 2005; Brackett et al., 2011; Contreras, 2007; Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli & Çıkılı, 2008; Iskos, Francisco & Gegiou, 2019; Kurtdede Fidan, 2009). It was added that practicing values through different activities in authentic contexts, would help children to internalize these values permanently, and finally help children reinforce those values that they have learned at home or in other school subjects.

As for the participants' responses to the third research question which asked what values they would consider teaching in the future profession, it was unanimously agreed that they would facilitate children's development of values in English. This finding is in line with Johnston (2003) who argued that the teacher is the biggest factor in children's value acquisition since children in primary school age spend more time at school than at home and that values

only become interesting when they are put into practice in social settings. Similarly, in the present study, the most important values referred to by the participants were friendship, respect, kindness, honesty, love, courage, justice, self-esteem, responsibility, determination and patriotism. They believed that through games and role-plays they would help children convert values into actions. Similar to Bartan (2005), Iskos, Francisco and Gegiou (2019) and Kılıç Şahin (2010), the participants believed that developing values in learners can best be achieved through involving them in contextualized and meaningful activities.

Conclusion

This study has investigated pre-service English teachers' opinions about values education in general, values in the primary EFL curriculum, and the type of values that they would introduce to children in their teaching profession. Johnston (2003) remarks that ELT is not solely a matter of training students to gain particular set of skills. Rather, the field of ELT is profoundly filled with values. In this sense, the EFL classroom may serve as a context in which learners may not only be taught the foreign language but they may also be introduced to the values. The present study is expected to serve as an example of how prospective teachers of English can be familiarized with the values education and the values in the EFL curriculum, as a preparation for their future profession. Further research can be conducted to observe the classroom practices of these participants in their teaching contexts to interpret the impact of their actions on children's acquisition of values.

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