



## Is tutoring a benefit for tutees only, or is it a mutual benefit?

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the opinions of the ELT (English Language Teaching) pre-service teachers who attended a tutoring program as tutors and the opinions of the EFL learners who were the tutees of this program. Thirteen pre-service teachers provided tutoring to thirty EFL learners in the spring semester at one of the private universities in Turkey. Out of thirty, 22 EFL learners were volunteers to participate in this study. Data from the tutors (pre-service teachers) were collected through face-to-face interviews, and from the tutees through a questionnaire sent as an e-mail. As there were pre-existing themes in the interview questions and the questionnaire, data were analysed and coded deductively. These themes were: *advantages of the tutoring program, challenges of the program, self-efficacy evaluation, communication between tutors and tutees, perceptions, and suggestions* of both parties. The findings of the study revealed that not only tutees but also tutors had many gains during this program. In other words, while the tutees learnt the structures they did not understand very well in class and increased their exam scores, the tutors had a chance to study with different age group (adults), practice the theories they were taught in their departments, and they could test their content and pedagogy knowledge efficacy. Despite the abundance of studies carried out to examine the effects of tutoring programs on tutors and tutees in the literature (Cohen et al., 1982; Elbaum et al., 2000), the studies conducted to investigate the tutoring programs on both parties (tutors and tutees) in English language education at tertiary level is rare. This study aimed to contribute to the relevant literature with its findings and implications by taking this scarcity into account.

### Keywords

EFL learners,  
language learning,  
one-on-one tutoring,  
pre-service teachers,  
tutoring program

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## Introduction

Most of the teachers do not have an opportunity to provide their students one-on-one support, possibly due to a high number of students in the classrooms and not having enough time after the classes. However, in the literature, one-on-one tutoring is thought to be the most effective way of improving students' academic achievement (Elbaum et al., 2000). This effect may come from the high engagement of learners in the learning process (Juel, 1996). Although most teachers generally cannot support their students individually, pre-service teachers may give this support to gain teaching experience before they graduate from their departments. In another saying, pre-service teachers can take the role of tutors, who can be the other participants of the learning process, and through this experience, tutors may "learn as much as or more than" the

students who are tutored (Annis, 1983). In addition, as Haverback and Parault (2008) indicated, “tutoring differs from other practicum experiences in that it offers the pre-service teachers an opportunity to assess their teaching ability and hone in on the theories they are learning in their university courses” (p. 238). Besides, it is possible to assert that if pre-service teachers have a chance to practice the theories they learnt in a natural teaching setting, they may improve themselves in terms of content knowledge and their learning *as much as or more than* the tutees may turn into an advantage for both parties. In other words, while tutees are improving their academic skills, the tutors may also enhance their existing field knowledge, and this process carries a high potential to become a mutual benefit.

By taking this high potential into account, the relevant literature was analysed meticulously, and two comprehensive meta-analyses by Cohen et al. (1982) and by Elbaum et al. (2000) were found and analysed in a detailed way. The main focus of the studies in these meta-analyses is mainly on the positive effects of tutoring programs on tutored school children and tutors who were generally volunteer teachers or volunteer college students. A study that specifically investigated a tutoring program provided by pre-service teachers to English language learners at the tertiary level was not found, which would be accepted as a gap to be filled in through this current study.

With this purpose, this study was set to investigate the possible benefits of a tutoring program on the pre-service teachers (tutors) in an ELT department at one of the private universities located in İstanbul, Turkey, and the possible benefits of this program on the EFL learners (tutees) in the School of Foreign Languages department of the same university. In the first place, the paper starts with stating the theory behind this study and reviewing the related literature. Then, it describes the methodology part, and it continues with presenting the results and the discussion sections. Finally, the study ends with the conclusion part along with some implications.

### **Literature Review**

Besides the benefits of tutoring programs, the positive effects of these programs on students who were tutored and tutors who provided one-on-one lessons were very well documented in a meta-analysis by Cohen et al., (1982). In this meta-analysis, including 65 tutoring studies, it was put forward that while tutees were outperforming their controls on examinations, tutors' attitudes toward subject matter knowledge developed positively. Nevertheless, most of these studies mainly focused on teaching reading to elementary and secondary school students. In other words, the purpose of these studies was to improve the early graders' reading efficacy in their native language.

In another meta-analysis on tutoring by Elbaum et al. (2000), 29 studies conducted between 1975-1998 were collected and documented in a detailed way, and these details were summarised in a chart in this study. When the details of these studies were analysed, it was seen that the tutoring lessons were provided by mostly volunteer teachers. Only in a few studies, the tutoring lessons were given by college students (pre-service teachers). After reviewing these two meta-analyses, the scarcity of research on tutoring provided to English learners (ELs) by pre-service teachers stands out. In some studies, (Hedrick, 1998; Hedrick et al., 2000; Juel, 1996), the tutoring lessons were provided by pre-service teachers; however, to our best

knowledge, there was only one study (Al Otaiba, 2005) in which pre-service teachers gave the tutoring lessons to ELs, and all these mentioned studies were summarised below with their findings.

In 1996, Juel researched the effectiveness of a literacy tutoring program. University students tutored elementary school children two times a week for one school year, and there was a control group that got mentoring from the same university students. In this tutoring program, tutors did various activities (reading children's literature, writing, introducing high-frequency words from the basal readers, journal, alphabet book, hearing word sounds, and letter-sound activities) with experimental group students. In the control group, mentoring was done through only one activity which was reading to students. Data came from reading test scores, tape recordings, and videotapes. Results revealed that both tutors and tutees showed literacy growth, which was significantly higher than the control group.

Hedrick (1998) conducted a study with forty senior pre-service teachers and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> elementary graders ( $n=30$ ) to investigate the effects of one-on-one tutoring. Tutors attended the tutoring program as part of their coursework requirement. Data were collected through a portfolio consisting of daily running records, comprehension assessments, writing samples, and the Basic Reading Inventory results. The findings presented that the benefits of this study twofold. Elementary graders improved their reading level significantly, and the pre-service teachers had an opportunity to practice teaching and assessment before they started their profession.

A similar study was carried out by Hedrick et al. (2000) to search for the effectiveness of one-on-one tutoring and its effects on tutors. The tutors were senior pre-service teachers who provided mathematics and reading tutoring to the elementary graders who were at risk of dropping out of school. It was a qualitative-based study; therefore, the data were gained through a questionnaire sent by e-mail. The results showed that tutors learnt more while tutoring, which stressed the importance of having field-based experiences for pre-service teachers.

Al Otaiba (2005) investigated the effects of tutoring program on the English learners' (EL) reading skills and the tutors' (pre-service teachers) knowledge about language structure. Eight pre-service teacher-tutors who attended the project were third-year undergraduate students. Eight tutees, two of them were Arabic, and the rest was Hispanic, were chosen by the ESL teacher working at the tutees' school. Pre-service teachers provided tutoring lessons twice a week until they completed 15 hours, which was the requirement of the project they attended. Pre-tests and post-tests were applied to gather the data. The findings demonstrated that both parties benefited from the tutoring program. While tutees' (ELs') raw scores on word attack, passage comprehension, and sound identification improved significantly, tutors' (pre-service teachers') knowledge about literacy and language structure improved from %57 to %99, which was nearly two times more.

### Significance and Aim of the Study

In the literature, there are many studies conducted to investigate the effects of tutoring programs, their impact on tutors and tutored students, and these studies were collected and very well documented in the meta-analyses by Cohen et al. (1982) and by Elbaum et al. (2000). When these studies were examined in terms of pre-service teachers' tutoring, only a few studies

(Hedrick, 1998; Hedrick et al., 2000; Juel, 1996) were found, and to our best knowledge, the study by Al Otaiba (2005) is the only one which investigated the effects of tutoring program on the English learners, and the tutors (pre-service teachers). Therefore, this current study aims to contribute to the relevant literature by searching for the opinions of the ELT pre-service teachers who attended the tutoring program as tutors and the EFL learners' opinions who were tutees of this program.

### Research Questions

In this present study, the following questions were addressed:

What are the opinions of tutors (pre-service teachers) about the one-on-one program they attended?

What are the opinions of tutees (Turkish EFL learners) about the one-on-one program they attended?

## Methodology

### Setting

This present study took place in one of the private universities in Turkey. There are nine faculties and one foreign languages school in this university. As the English Language Teaching (ELT) department and the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) collaborated in this study, information regarding these two is given briefly.

ELT Department is one of the departments of education faculty, and it lasts four years. This department provides students with English language and literacy, methodology, first and second language acquisition, educational sciences, and linguistics to make them qualified English teachers in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions.

SFL is the first program for all students who win different departments of this private university, and the medium of instruction in all departments is English. This program lasts one year and provides both English and Turkish language education. Most of the students are Turkish EFL learners, while about %10 come from Eastern countries. In SFL, a modular system is in effect. An academic year comprises five modules (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1), and each module lasts eight weeks. After EFL learners finish this language school successfully, they start their departments the following year.

### Participants

The participants of this study are tutors (ELT pre-service teachers), tutees (EFL Turkish learners), and the researchers of this study. The information about these three group participants is given separately.

## Tutors

In total, 14 ELT pre-service teachers were giving a one-on-one tutorial to the SFL students. All these pre-service teachers voluntarily attended this program, and some studied with more than one tutee. They mainly studied grammar, reading, speaking, writing, and vocabulary skills with their tutees. One of the tutors could not attend the face-to-face interviews; therefore, the data were collected from 13 pre-service teachers whose ages range between 19-34. The number of female pre-service teachers was 11, and two of them were male. Except for one of the pre-service teachers, who is from Afghanistan, all of them were Turkish. Out of thirteen, 6 of them were seniors, four were juniors, and 3 of them were sophomores. The pre-service teachers were coded as tutors and by numbers for anonymity (e.g. Tutor 1, Tutor 2, Tutor 3, etc.). Table 1 below presents the demographic data of tutors along with their total tutoring hours. (In this study, *pre-service teachers* and *tutors* are used interchangeably).

**Table 1: Demographic Data of the Pre-service Teachers**

Pre-service Teachers	Gender	Year	Age	Total Tutoring Hours
Tutor 1	Female	Senior	21	60
Tutor 2	Female	Senior	22	12
Tutor 3	Female	Senior	22	25
Tutor 4	Female	Senior	24	18
Tutor 5	Female	Senior	22	20
Tutor 6	Female	Senior	23	18
Tutor 7	Male	Junior	20	20
Tutor 8	Female	Junior	23	30
Tutor 9	Female	Junior	21	3
Tutor 10	Female	Junior	34	55
Tutor 11	Female	Sophomore	19	8
Tutor 12	Female	Sophomore	19	6
Tutor 13	Male	Sophomore	24	13

## Tutees

SFL management identified fifty students who needed to attend this one-on-one tutoring program. These students were having academic difficulties, they were not attending the lessons regularly, and because of these issues, they were at risk of dropping out of school. Therefore, the school management reached these students by calling them to explain this program, and the students were asked whether they want to attend this one-on-one tutoring. After this procedure, thirty of these students started to participate in this program voluntarily. As they generally showed absenteeism during school hours, the questionnaire was sent via e-mail to collect the data from the tutees. Out of thirty students, 22 replied to the questionnaire, and 9 of twenty-two students were female, and thirteen were male. All of them were Turkish EFL learners whose ages range between 18-31. Out of twenty-two, one of the tutees was A2, eighteen of them were B1, three were B2 English level students. As tutors, all tutees were coded by numbers (e.g., Tutee 1, Tutee 2, Tutee 3, etc.). (In this study, *EFL learners* and *tutees* are used interchangeably).

## Researchers

The other participants are the researchers of this study. One of the researchers is a Ph.D. student and an EFL instructor for 12 years. She carried out the face-to-face interviews with the tutors and sent an e-mail to the tutees. The other researcher is a professor in the ELT department of this private university.

## Research Design

The participants of the study are members of one institution, and their opinions were collected to gain a better understanding of their experiences during this tutoring program. Therefore, the design of this study is a case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, “focuses on an issue with the case (individual, multiple individuals, program, or activity) selected to provide insight into the issue” (Creswell et al., 2007, p. 245).

## Tutoring Program

In the spring semester of the academic year 2018-2019, the SFL management started a tutoring program named LEAD (Learner Academic Development), a student-follow-up program. Its primary aim was to identify the students with high absenteeism, poor academic performance, lack of motivation, and implement early intervention strategies to generate increased school attendance, continued academic success, and comprehensive student support to reduce dropout rates. As a first step, the SFL management contacted ELT department professors and proposed this tutoring program. After the approval of ELT professors, a call was made to the pre-service teachers whether they were volunteer to participate in this one-on-one tutoring program. At the same time, the SFL management administered some ELT instructors (named as LEAD teachers) who were in charge of following up the process of the one-on-one tutoring program. These teachers were responsible for matching the tutors with tutees, providing necessary materials, keeping the record of the absenteeism, and solving any problem regarding the tutoring program. Afterward, LEAD teachers identified and contacted the students at risk. Then these students were informed about the program and asked whether they want to attend one-on-one tutorials given by ELT pre-service teachers. Right after the volunteer students were identified, they were matched with one of the ELT pre-service teachers. As a final step, the tutors and tutees arranged the time and place to start their one-on-one tutoring. Generally, a student studied with his/her tutors two hours a week; however, if the tutor and tutee had much more available time, they studied more than two hours a week. The content of the tutoring lessons was identified according to the tutees' needs. If a tutee wanted to study a specific skill like grammar, reading, or writing, s/he informed her/his tutor beforehand. When the tutors had information on what to study, they asked for the necessary materials from the LEAD teachers. After the materials were provided, the tutors made their preparations, and they studied and practiced the specified skill with their tutees during the tutoring lessons. This tutoring program (LEAD), which was in the trial period during this study, also aimed to set an example for the other faculties and be implemented university-wide in the following academic years.

## Procedure

At the beginning of the spring semester of the academic year 2018-2019, the tutors and the tutees were matched with each other by the LEAD program administrators, and the tutors started to study with their tutees. However, when the total hours of tutoring are checked in *Table I*, it is seen that all tutors had a different number of tutoring hours. The reason for this difference is that some tutors started this program at the very beginning of the semester, but some others started later. Also, some of the tutors and tutees could not arrange a suitable time and place, so there were times that tutoring lessons were canceled. At the end of the spring semester, both tutors and tutees had their final exams in their departments; therefore, both parties ended the tutoring program.

When the program finished, one of the researchers started to collect the data of this study. She contacted all the tutors to interview them. After scheduling the dates, the researcher began to meet with the tutors and held the interviews in a quiet office room. All the interviews were audio-recorded, and these recordings were transcribed verbatim. The average time of each interview was 18 min 65 s. The Turkish language was spoken in the interviews; however, all the data were translated into English by the researchers.

After the interviews with tutors finished, the researcher started to collect the data from the tutees. However, as it was the students' final exam week, and these students were generally absent even during the regular school time, a face-to-face interview was not possible; therefore, a questionnaire was sent through e-mail, and the data of the tutees were collected through the written answers to the questions. All the questions and answers were written in Turkish, and the responses of the tutees used in the results section were translated into English by the researchers.

## Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the qualitative- case study design was in use; therefore, the data were gathered through face-to-face interviews and a questionnaire sent by e-mail. The researchers developed the questions of the interview held with pre-service teachers and the questionnaire sent to the EFL learners by benefiting from the scales by Hedrick et al. (2000) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). In this study, some specific themes were intended to be searched; that is why semi-structured questions were used during the interviews and in the questionnaire. The tutors' interview consisting of eleven open-ended questions included five themes, which were turned into topical themes, and these are *advantages of the tutoring program*, *challenges during the tutoring program*, *self-efficacy*, *communication*, and *perceptions-suggestions*, which were given in Appendix A. The tutees' questionnaire had the same five themes, and this questionnaire included seven open-ended questions, and they were presented in Appendix B.

## Data Analysis

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and questionnaires sent by e-mails; therefore, qualitative analysis was used to answer this study's research questions. As the interview questions and the questionnaire had pre-existing themes, content analysis was used

while analysing the data. As Joffe and Yardley (2004) addresses, content analysis “determines the frequencies of the occurrences of particular categories” (p. 56).

While applying the content analysis, a summative approach was adopted. To illustrate, while the researchers were analysing *the advantages of the tutoring program for the tutors*, they created a column named ‘advantages for tutors’ on a document and wrote the statements (words, chunks, phrases) said by each pre-service teacher in that column one by one. When the ‘advantages’ section was over, they counted the most frequent statements (e.g. job experience, practising the theories, etc.), and these frequent statements were presented under the ‘advantages of the tutoring program’ title with some of the relevant quotations told by the pre-service teachers. Then, the researchers moved on with the other themes. When the data from pre-service teachers were finalised, the researchers applied the same coding approach to the data gathered from the EFL learners. To be precise and concise, the statements that appeared less than two times were not presented in the results section. As for the interrater reliability, Cohen’s Kappa value was computed and it was found to be .83.

## Results

The researchers read the transcribed data three times to identify the recurring statements. These statements were presented under five specified topical themes. Some of the tutors’ quotations and the tutees’ answers were given in italics to exemplify the findings. First, the tutors’ interview results were given, then the results gained from the tutees’ questionnaire were presented. However, it is necessary to mention that the responses collected from the tutees were generally very short and repetitive; therefore, the results and the quotations regarding the tutees’ opinions usually are limited.

### Advantages of the tutoring program

*Tutors.* Nearly all the tutors stated that this one-on-one tutoring program provided them with many advantages, and they had a chance to benefit from this program in many ways. One of the most stated advantages was the experience of one-on-one teaching. Although most of them did micro and macro teaching in their practicum schools, they stated that it was the first time they experienced one-on-one teaching, and they found it different from teaching in class. Tutor 4 said that *"It was the first time I taught one-on-one. In this program, I had a chance to focus on my student's weaknesses more. In class, I may not have this chance, but in one-on-one tutoring lessons, I had, and I gained much experience."* Besides, most of the tutors enjoyed teaching adult learners rather than teaching young learners with whom they studied in their practicum schools. Some of them expressed that they had concerns about studying with adults, but after this program, they pointed out that their mindset had changed. Tutor 6 highlighted this by saying, *"I had doubts about studying with adult learners. After this program, I liked to study with adults."* Another advantage regarding studying with adult learners was that the tutors had better communication thanks to the closed ages, and this was stated by Tutor 9 as *"I always studied with young learners, and this is the first time I studied with adult learners. I realised that studying with them is better because it is easier to communicate as our ages are close."*

The tutors had a chance to practice whether the theories work they learnt in their department courses. While some of them found that theories were helpful in practice, some

others indicated that they did not use the theories a lot; instead, they used their creativity while they were teaching, and Tutor 1 stressed that *"I did not use the theories a lot; instead I tried to find my way in the lessons because when the students asked me a question, I could not remember those theories, and I needed to answer their questions in a short time."* On the other hand, Tutor 8 had a chance to internalise some theories in this one-on-one tutoring program, and in the interview, she reflected that *"I had a chance to practice the theories that I learnt in my department. I learnt that there are many different student profiles. In my department lessons, we always talked that the learners have individual differences, but I experienced what individual differences really mean through this program."* Besides, tutors emphasised that they improved their language skills (i.e. grammar, and vocabulary) as they were responsible for teaching the language accurately. Tutor 1 explained that *"Before the lessons, I made preparations on the topics, and in this way, my grammar teaching and learning improved as well. I thought that 'what' is one of the relative pronouns, but I realised that I did not know enough when my student asked. Then I studied and learnt that 'what' is used in noun clauses, not relative clauses. My other skills (vocab, reading) improved as well."*

An increase in self-confidence was one of the other benefits for tutors in this program. They indicated that the more they realised that they could teach, the more they believed in themselves. Tutor 7 summed it up by saying, *"I did not have enough self-confidence at the beginning, but later I realised that I could teach. I learnt that I could do this job. I am happy that I learnt this before I graduate."* and Tutor 12 expressed her belief as *"In this program, I realised that I really want to be a teacher. When I saw that I could teach, I enjoyed it. When my student learnt, I liked it. I have good opinions about being a teacher."* Most of the tutors also stated that they observed improvement in their tutees' language skills and academic success.

**Tutees.** In the tutees' questionnaire results, it was found that all of them benefited from this program. They pointed out that they had a chance to revise the topics they did not understand in the classroom. They could identify their weak areas and focus on these areas in a detailed way. Also, they indicated that they improved their grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills mainly, and some stated that their exam scores increased as they improved their language skills in these one-on-one tutoring lessons. *"I learnt the topics that I could not understand in class, which made me more successful in the exams"* (Tutee 12).

### Challenges during the tutoring program

**Tutors.** The main challenge the tutors experienced in this one-on-one tutoring program was teaching language skills appropriately. Although it was mentioned as one of the advantages of this program above, it was also stated as a challenge by the tutors. They indicated that they learnt about teaching techniques and strategies in their department courses, but they did not practice their knowledge for years; therefore, they needed to get prepared before the lessons. Tutor 6 explained her thought as *"We did not learn about grammar or vocabulary during those four years (in the department). We mainly learned about teaching styles and techniques, so I needed to practice the topics before the lessons. It did not make me tired, but it took a little time. I know how to use grammar and vocabulary, but I needed to get prepared for how to teach. Sometimes I could not remember some of the words, and I got worried about my students'*

*thoughts about me, but it did not cause any problem.*" Some tutors expressed they could not decide whether they should teach in English or Turkish, and Tutor 7 reflected it as a challenge and a concern. He said that *"At the beginning, I planned to teach the lessons in English, then I realised that they did not understand me. Then, I started to teach in Turkish, which is not right, I think."* Other than these two challenges, motivating the students was another challenge for the tutors. These students were the ones who were at-risk group, and lack of motivation was one of the reasons why they were not successful in their lessons. According to the tutors' observations, some tutees showed the same unwillingness in tutoring lessons as well.

In the interviews, tutors were asked to rank the teaching language skills from the most challenging one to the easiest one. According to most of the tutors' answers, teaching productive skills, mainly writing skill, was the most challenging skill to teach. Most of the tutors found teaching writing skill difficult due to their lack of teaching practice in writing or the students' lack of organisation and content knowledge. Tutor 3 stated that *"Teaching writing is the hardest because it heavily depends on the knowledge of the students. If they do not know the necessary knowledge about how to compose a paragraph or an essay, they cannot write."* On the other hand, grammar teaching was accepted as the most effortless skill to teach, and most of the tutors stated that when they taught grammar, they felt relaxed and comfortable themselves. *"Grammar is easy to teach because it has set rules."* (Tutor 7).

**Tutees.** Except for three tutees, all of them stated that they were quite satisfied with the program, and no challenges or problems were experienced. Two tutees stated that they could not arrange an appropriate time to study with their tutors. As it was stated before, the tutors and tutees were responsible for arranging the time and date. While this flexibility was an advantage for most of the tutees, for these two, it was not. The other tutee indicated that he needed a more experienced tutor, especially for the writing lessons, which was also found as one of the challenges of tutees.

### Self-efficacy

**Tutors.** Most of the tutors remarked that their self-efficacy in language knowledge and teaching skills was at a moderate level. Nearly all stated that during this tutoring program, they progressed and showed improvement in terms of their language knowledge and teaching skills; however, they did not see themselves enough. It was obvious from their responses that their awareness of testing their knowledge and teaching skills increased as they taught and experienced. Tutor 12 summarised her thoughts about teaching efficacy as *"My knowledge and teaching efficacy levels are moderate, I think. If I taught a grammar topic that I did not know, I would have difficulties. I think I need to get more professional."*

Besides, some of the tutors put forth that when their tutees asked questions about the topics that the tutors did not get prepared before the lessons, they felt panicked and anxious, and at those times, some tutors stated that it was not easy for them to cope with not being able to answer their tutees' questions. However, some tutors said that although they had times that they could not answer random questions, they were able to control these situations. Tutor 11 described her experience as *"While teaching vocabulary, sometimes I had difficulties in explaining the meanings of the words, and I had some concerns. I thought that my student would*

*judge me, but later I normalised this situation, and after a while, when there were words that I did not know the meanings, I checked them with my student."*

**Tutees.** Most of the tutees found their tutors efficient in terms of their content knowledge and teaching ability. Some tutees also found their tutors' teaching so fluent that they never got bored in the tutoring lessons. *"My tutor was quite effective. If I evaluate her teaching ability, I can easily say that whenever we studied, I never realised how time passed"* (Tutee 1). Especially in teaching grammar, tutors were found quite enough, and this result corresponded with the tutors' interview results in which the tutors stated that grammar skill was the one they taught comfortably.

### Communication

**Tutors.** Half of the tutors said that their communication and relationship were held in a friendly manner with tutees as their ages were close. They did not want their tutees to call them as a teacher, or when their tutees did not call them as a teacher, tutors did not think that it would be a problem. One of the tutors (Tutor 13) explained the rationale behind it as *"Our communication was friendly. I never tried to be a traditional teacher, and I always told them that I was their friend. If I behave like a traditional teacher, what is the purpose of the tutorial? A private tutor should be well-connected as a friend."* On the other hand, half of the tutors stated that their relationship with their tutees had limits. In other words, tutors were the teachers, tutees were the students, and both sides behaved accordingly. Tutor 3's statement supports this finding, *"Our relationship was respectful. I was in the position of their teacher, and they were in the position of my students."* In addition to communication between tutors and tutees, the communication between tutors and their professors during this tutoring program was asked to understand whether they discussed the process or asked for help. Except for four tutors, all of them said that they did not talk about the tutoring program's process or any details with their professors. Four tutors indicated that they took some advice about teaching tips like using L1 or L2 in the tutoring lessons.

**Tutees.** Statements of tutees were in parallel with what tutors said in their interviews. Some of the tutees indicated that their relationship was more than a student-teacher relationship; it was like a friendship. *"It was like I was listening to a lesson from one of my friends"* (Tutor 9). On the other hand, some of the tutees expressed that the communication with their tutors was a respectful student-teacher relationship. *"Our relationship was as it was supposed to be. She was my teacher; I was her student"* (Tutor 6).

### Perceptions and suggestions

**Tutors.** The most frequently changing perception about being a teacher was the profile the tutors wanted to study. Before this tutoring program, most of them indicated that they thought they could only teach young learners as they did their practicum in elementary or secondary schools; however, after this program, their perception changed, and they wanted to keep teaching to adult learners. Tutor 4 summed it up by saying, *"I thought that teaching young students were better, but this program changed my mind. I felt more relaxed with adult students because they*

*listen and understand more and better. It was not like I thought. I learnt that teaching does not only mean studying with young learners; it is also possible to teach adults."* Some tutors stated that being a teacher was not as easy as they thought, and they added that being a teacher meant being able to deal with many things at the same time. Tutor 11 defined it as *"Being teacher is experiencing many feelings together. It is both fear and pride. Fear of being insufficient and pride of being enough. Being a teacher is transforming your feelings, your mindset, actually it is transforming yourself."*

As for the suggestions, tutors wanted to study with more motivated and disciplined students. According to their statements, nearly all of them complained about the students' cancellation of the lessons. As the tutorials were provided by the school management for free, and as the tutees and tutors were allowed to decide about the time and place on their own, it turned out that some tutees did not attend the lessons regularly; therefore, it was suggested by some tutors that these lessons should be controlled in a more disciplined way by the school management and the tutees should feel more responsible for tutoring lessons. Tutor 7 explained that *"The students did not come to the lessons regularly. Sometimes I delayed my lessons, projects for this program, but some students cancelled the lessons at the last minute. It should be controlled by the management."* One another suggestion by tutors was that they needed more information about the students they were going to study. As tutors did not have enough information about their students' weaknesses, they spent too much time understanding their students' needs. Tutor 5 stressed this need as *"There should have been a report about the students' weaknesses. I should not have asked my students which skills or topics they needed to study. I should have known these before we started the lessons."*

**Tutees.** Under the category of perceptions, tutees' awareness about their weaknesses in specific language skills and academic improvements was aimed to be searched if there were any. All tutees' needs were various; however, the most needed language skills were vocabulary and writing. In this language school, students have weekly vocabulary exams. The average vocabulary item they are responsible for every week is about fifty; therefore, EFL learners need to study vocabulary items (with their definitions, antonyms, synonyms, other word forms, etc.) regularly. Their statements in the questionnaire showed that they could study vocabulary items with their tutors, and their improvements positively affected their weekly vocabulary exams. However, the second most needed language skill, which was writing skill, was not improved according to tutees' expressions. As stated earlier, not only tutors had some challenges in teaching this skill, but also tutees had some problems in learning it. Thus, it was found that while tutees improved themselves in vocabulary, grammar, reading skills, they could not show the same improvement in the writing skill as they needed. *"I needed help in writing skills, but our school requirements for writing tasks are different, and I thought that my tutor could not be helpful about this, so we did not study it. Instead, we mainly studied grammar"* (Tutee, 13). Apart from weekly vocabulary exams, EFL learners have various exams for each skill, and the tutees' statements indicated that their exam scores got increased and they could pass another language level more easily. *"This program affected my grades, and it helped me pass the exams"* (Tutor 6). Some of the tutees indicated that their motivation increased and their attitudes toward school and lessons changed as they were involved in this program. *"When our school*

*included me in this program, my thoughts about school changed positively. I got motivated a lot, and I studied more on the things that I could not understand” (Tutee 6).*

Some of the tutees suggested that they needed more hours to study with their tutors as they needed support in nearly each language skill. Another suggestion was about the involvement of the students in this program. Some stated that they started this program in the middle of the semester or when the semester was about the finish; therefore, they wished they were included or informed about the tutoring program at the very beginning of the semester. Besides, one of the tutees suggested what the tutors suggested. They wanted their tutors to be informed about the language school program and the tutees' weaknesses beforehand. *“It would be better if the tutors had known about the language school program and us more” (Tutee 22).*

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The interview results of the pre-service teachers showed that despite some challenges like difficulty in teaching writing, moderate level of self-efficacy, they all benefited from the program. Although nearly all of them practised teaching in their practicum schools, it was the first time they had a chance to teach one-on-one, and the findings indicated that their experiences in these lessons were different from the class teaching. This finding supports the statement by Haverback and Parault (2008), who mentioned in their study that tutoring is a different experience than the practicum experiences for pre-service teachers as they have more chance to focus on the theories they are learning in their departments. Some could use and internalise the theories, whereas others tried to apply their techniques to help their tutees. It can be said that they could test the theories' usefulness and practicality by doing hands-on activities, which was also concluded in the study by Hedrick et al. (2000). Moreover, in this tutoring process, it was found that pre-service teachers extended their content knowledge. This finding is in parallel with Al Otaiba (2005) results, in which the pre-service teachers almost doubled their language structure knowledge after 15 hours of tutoring experiences. Another finding from the interviews of pre-service teachers showed that most of them had a moderate level of self-efficacy. Bandura (2007) describes that perceived self-efficacy is “concerned not with what one has but with belief in what one can do with whatever resources one can muster” (p. 6). This description helps to understand that the pre-service teachers' belief is between what they can do and what they cannot.

The questionnaire results of the tutees demonstrated that they were quite optimistic about the tutoring program. They improved their language skills and increased their exam scores. In another saying, their academic achievements were levelled up, which was one of the aims of the stakeholders. This finding is in line with the studies by Al Otaiba (2005), Hedrick (1998), and Juel (1996); in all these, the academic achievements of the tutees improved significantly.

As concluding remarks, studies regarding tutoring one-on-one in language education are scarce within the literature; therefore, the researchers of this study wanted to contribute to the knowledge of tutoring in this field and conducted this study to investigate the opinions of the tutors (the pre-service teachers) and the tutees (the EFL learners) who were involved in a tutoring program held by one of the private university's ELT department and its foreign language school as a collaboration project. Besides, inspired by the theory of Zone of Proximal

Development (Vygotsky, 1978), it was aimed to investigate whether only less experienced individuals learn better when they work in collaboration with more skilled persons. The findings of this study enabled the researchers to conclude that not only less experienced individuals (EFL learners) but also more skilled persons (ELT pre-service teachers) learnt a lot and improved their actual development level through this collaboration. For further research, setting a well-structured (Ellson, 1976; Rosenshine & Furst, 1969) and controlled tutoring program may be suggested to contribute to the regarding literature richly.

### **Implications and Limitations**

One of the implications of this study is that one-on-one support might have a high potential to increase the academic achievements of students who may have difficulties in understanding the topics taught in classrooms. However, expecting this individual support from teachers having full-time responsibilities may not be possible. As this is the case, institutions may provide some other solutions such as providing tutoring lessons with the collaboration of other parties to decrease the dropout risk and increase students' academic success.

Another implication is that education faculties may create opportunities for their pre-service teachers to practice their teaching skills with different age groups and in different contexts before they graduate from their departments. In this way, pre-service teachers may have a chance to expand their teaching experiences and decide their future teaching groups accordingly. As stated, pre-service teachers generally do their practicums with elementary or secondary students; however, if they have an opportunity to study with adult learners, they may benefit from their teaching repertoire while shaping their careers.

The final implication is that pre-service teachers are generally engaged with learning theories and techniques to improve their teaching skills during their university education years. However, as one of the tutors indicated that when they are asked questions that they are not prepared for, knowing and explaining the content knowledge becomes much more valuable. Besides, not being able to answer the questions of their students may influence their self-efficacy adversely. That is why, rather than relying on the practicum experiences only, providing more and diverse teaching opportunities may contribute to pre-service teachers' content knowledge and self-efficacy.

As for the limitations, the results of this study are limited to this tutoring program held in this private university. To have a broad and deeper understanding of such programs' possible benefits and challenges, such tutoring programs should be implemented in more universities by including state ones. Another limitation is that this tutoring program was carried out as a project and only once. By considering this, turning this project into a permanent program would be reasonable to understand whether it has consistent results in the following semesters.

### **Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions of Pre-service Teachers (Tutors)

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Advantages	1. As a pre-service teacher, did you have any advantages during this one-on-one tutoring program? If so, what are they?
	2. Do you think your student had any benefits through this program? If so, what are they?
Challenges	3. Did you experience any challenges? If so, what are they?
	4. In which areas did you have problems? (i.e. vocab teaching, grammar teaching)
	5. Do you think your student had any problems during this one to one tutoring lessons? If so, what are they?
Self-Efficacy	6. How do you evaluate your knowledge and self-efficacy during these lessons?
	7. How efficient were you while answering your student's questions?
Communication	8. How do you evaluate the communication between you and your student in terms of the teacher-student relationship?
	9. How do you evaluate the communication between you and your professor, your instructor in charge?
Perceptions& Suggestions	10. Did these lessons affect your perceptions about being a teacher? If so, how?
	11. Do you have any suggestions for this program?

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## APPENDIX B

### The questionnaire of EFL Learners (Tutees)

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Advantages	1. Did you have any benefits during this program? If so, what are they?
Challenges	2. Did you have any challenges during this program? If so, what are they?
Efficacy	3. How do you evaluate your tutor's knowledge and teaching efficacy during these one-on-one tutoring lessons?
Communication	4. How do you evaluate the communication between you and your tutor in terms of the teacher-student relationship?
Perceptions& Suggestions	5. Did this one to one tutoring program affect your academic success (i.e. exams)? If so, how?
	6. In which skill (i.e. grammar, reading) did you need help most? Was this program helpful for your needs?
	7. Do you have any suggestions?

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