

MICROTEACHING LESSON STUDY FOR PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: DESIGNING A RESEARCH LESSON

Abstract: In this study, Microteaching Lesson Study (hereafter MLS) was applied for a research lesson designed by the MLS group members including three third-year prospective English language teachers in line with the Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL) approach. This qualitative study aims to uncover the contribution of MLS to the improvement of the teaching within a single lesson geared toward young learners and the perspectives of MLS group members about major components of the MLS process. The participants of the study are three MLS group members, 15 peers and an instructor in the English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT) department of a state university in Turkey. The lesson collaboratively developed by the MLS group members was presented three times by a different member to a different group of five peers who pretended to be young learners. After each lesson, revision meetings were held to analyze the self-reflection of the presenter, the peer/instructor feedback about the lesson and the recorded lesson. The analysis of the revision meetings illustrated the instructional improvement cycle of MLS. Moreover, the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the MLS group members revealed that they were generally satisfied with the major components of MLS, such as collaborative lesson planning and receiving feedback from peers although a few concerns were mentioned as well. It is suggested that MLS should be incorporated into ELT programs.

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INTRODUCTION

With the widespread popularity of learning English as a Foreign Language (hereafter EFL), English language teacher education programs have been given special attention, and the professional development of EFL teachers has become a key to quality English language instruction (Richards, 2017). However, the design of some professional development programs for language teachers can be based on a one-size-fits-all and one-shot mentality causing a one-way knowledge transmission; instead, such programs should encourage reflective processes, experiential learning, construction of new knowledge and the joint efforts of communities of practice as a means of improvement over time (Atay, 2007; Burns & Richards, 2009; Daloğlu, 2004; Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Uysal, 2012).

It is recommended that rather than being the passive receivers and implementers of expert-driven prescribed classroom routines, teachers should be reflective enough to take informed professional decisions in the classroom and engage in continuous improvement of their pedagogical skills; therefore, the current teacher education practices should provide teachers with sufficient opportunities to experiment teaching by practicing (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Garet et al., 2001; Leu, 2004). The merits of inquiry showing potential to enable teachers to work on an area of their instruction, collect and analyze data and make necessary changes in their instructional processes were emphasized in the literature (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

In the midst of the discussion above related to teacher education, Lesson Study (hereafter LS) is considered by many researchers to be an effective, sustainable and an inquiry-based teacher education approach which is alternative to other approaches with such shortcomings as being short-term and administered externally (Cerbin & Kopp, 2006; Dudley, 2011; Hunter & Back, 2011; Murata & Takahashi, 2002; Rock & Wilson, 2005). In LS, a group of teachers plan, implement, observe and revise their collaborative research lesson (Cerbin & Kopp, 2006). Originally known as *Jugyou kenkyuu*, LS originated in Japan as a teacher education approach (Watanabe, 2002) based on the application of communities of practice through which teachers cooperate to reflect upon and improve their teaching practices (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006; Rock & Wilson, 2005). LS has been the subject of many studies in different disciplines as a means of contributing to students' achievement test scores, teachers' professional development and confidence, the cooperative relationships among teachers and the improvement of instruction (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006; Rock & Wilson, 2005; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Takahashi, 2014).

Although LS is mainly used among in-service teachers, its use for pre-service teacher education is a recent phenomenon (Yalçın Arslan, 2018). Similar to in-service teachers, pre-service teachers are also in need of the development of skills leading them to reflect on their own and others' practices (Peters, 2012). Therefore, based on the LS approach, MLS emerged as an approach for pre-service teachers by combining elements of LS and microteaching (Fernandez, 2005).

Unlike LS in which the lessons are taught to usual classes for usual class length, the lessons in MLS are presented to a smaller group of students or a group of peers for shorter length of class hour (Fernandez, 2010; Suryani et al., 2018). In studies outside the field of pre-service EFL teacher education, it was found that MLS paved the way for reform-oriented teaching, active learning through discussions, planning, support from a knowledgeable advisor, collaboration with peers, and opportunity to try, analyze and revise (Fernandez, 2005; Fernandez, 2010). Therefore, this study aims to apply MLS to a language-driven CLIL lesson collaboratively designed by three third-year prospective EFL teachers in the ELT department of a state university in Turkey. CLIL is known to be a general term used for the integration of foreign language learning and content by means of different models, such as content-driven and

language-driven (Banegas, 2013). In a language-driven CLIL context, learning the language is prioritized, and content from various disciplines is regarded as a tool (Ikeda, 2013).

LESSON STUDY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

LS has recently been popular in EFL teacher education programs in Turkey and in different parts of world. For instance, it was revealed in studies carried out in Turkey that despite some drawbacks such as the timing and effort required by the LS process (Bayram & Canaran, 2019; Coşkun, 2017), LS is useful in terms of enabling EFL teachers to be more enthusiastic about carrying out research (Bayram & Canaran, 2019) and providing them with opportunities to observe and evaluate their teaching practices (Kıncal, Ozan, & İleritürk, 2019). It was also discovered that LS contributes to EFL teachers' positive changes related to their assessment and reflection skills in addition to creating a learning environment suitable for the growth of pedagogical content knowledge and a goal-oriented community of practice (Orhan, 2020; Uştuk, 2020).

Additionally, there have been some studies using LS in the language teaching and learning processes abroad. For example, LS was found to be beneficial in the following areas: enhancing students' literature writing ability (Susanto et al., 2020), aiding professional development (Lander, 2015), increasing teachers' pedagogical knowledge in technology and confidence in teaching with technology (Nami, Marandi, & Sotoudehnama, 2015), improving the teaching and learning process (Nashruddin & Nurrachman, 2016), switching from a teacher-centric view to an understanding of the teacher role as a facilitator (Tan-Chia, Fang, & Ang, 2013), fostering self-reflection, professional knowledge and pedagogical skills (Lee, 2008) as well as gaining a pedagogical point of view to be able to approach the lesson from students' perspectives (Goh & Fang, 2017).

The LS process has also been recently incorporated into pre-service foreign language teacher education programs abroad and in Turkey. To illustrate a study carried out abroad, Ducrey Monnier and Gruson (2018) discovered that through the LS process, the way student teachers carried out the stages of an EFL lesson integrating a speaking pair-work activity improved, and it was concluded that LS can enhance their teaching skills and didactic knowledge. On the other hand, in the Turkish pre-service EFL teacher education context, it was demonstrated that LS has the potential to increase student teachers' agency because it deepens their understanding of teaching (Yalçın Arslan, 2018). In another study in Turkey, Altınoy (2020) found that LS gives rise to positive attitudes towards professional development opportunities (e.g., willingness to work in a collaborative environment) and the teaching and learning process in addition to increasing awareness about the complex nature of classroom and focusing more on student learning.

Although LS has been implemented in both in-service and pre-service EFL teacher education contexts abroad and in Turkey, MLS requiring a reduced lesson length and a class size including either students or peers (Fernandez, 2005; Fernandez, 2010) has mostly been the subject of pre-service teacher education in such fields as mathematics and elementary education in studies in Turkey (Akbaba Dağ & Doğan Temur, 2018; Aldemir, 2017). Furthermore, the number of research studies using MLS in EFL contexts is limited to a few international studies concluding that MLS can promote pre-service EFL teachers' life-long learning to teach the English language, teaching practices and reflective skills (Nguyen, 2020; Suryani, 2016; Suryani et al., 2017; Suryani et al., 2018).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no studies involving student teachers in an MLS procedure have been conducted in the EFL context of Turkey. Considering the benefits of LS and MLS components for pre-service EFL teacher education as mentioned in the aforementioned literature, there is a need to implement MLS in Turkey. Moreover, even though materials development and lesson planning play an important role in forming prospective CLIL

teachers' practices (Banegas & del Pozo Beamud, 2020), there have been no studies in Turkey dealing with the design of a CLIL research lesson by EFL student teachers engaging in MLS. Thus, this study has the main objective to reveal the improvement of instruction within a CLIL lesson by means of the MLS procedure and to ascertain the perspectives of three MLS group members about the major components of MLS. In line with these aims, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How is instruction in a CLIL research lesson improved throughout the MLS procedure?
2. What are MLS group members' perspectives about the components of MLS?

METHODS

Qualitative research studies in the field of language teaching and learning include data from a number of different sources so as to obtain the perspectives of participants (Nassaji, 2015). Therefore, this qualitative study focuses on how instruction in a CLIL lesson improved over time throughout the MLS process and what the MLS group members think about major MLS components.

The data related to the improvement of instruction were collected via pre-lesson meetings held to collaboratively prepare a lesson, and revision meetings arranged after each lesson to discuss the self-reflections and peer/advisor feedback about the lesson as well as to critique the recorded lesson (Fernandez, 2010). On the other hand, MLS group members' perspectives about major components of MLS were obtained through individual semi-structured interviews, and descriptive analysis requiring the presentation of direct quotations reflecting the opinions of the participants relevant to the interview questions was used in the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003).

PARTICIPANTS

The MLS group members in the study were three volunteer third-year prospective teachers at the ELT department of a state university in Turkey. Two of them were female while the other was male. Also, 15 peers, 13 of whom were female and two were male, volunteered to pretend to be students and gave feedback for the improvement of instruction. Also, the instructor took part in the MLS process as a knowledgeable advisor (Fernandez, 2010).

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

ELT programs in Turkey are four-year programs aiming to equip prospective teachers with skills to teach the English language to students in different grade levels. As pointed out by Öztürk and Aydın (2019), first- and second-year students in these programs are mostly offered skill-based courses (e.g., Writing Skills 1-2) and theoretical courses (e.g., Linguistics 1-2) while third- and fourth-year students attend practice-based courses (e.g., Practicum).

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

As MLS group members in the study were unfamiliar with CLIL, a language-driven CLIL lesson topic (i.e., Planets) was chosen purposefully by the instructor in accordance with the 7th grade English language syllabus of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2018) in Turkey to increase their awareness of teaching CLIL.

The MLS cycles and the research procedure in this study are based on the framework suggested by Fernandez (2010). Firstly, a thirty-minute microteaching lesson plan was collaboratively prepared by the MLS group members in pre-lesson meetings. The lesson was first presented by one of the volunteering MLS group members to five peers who pretended to be 7th grade young learners. Necessary revisions were made in the revision meetings considering the peer/instructor feedback, self-reflection of the presenter and the critique of the recorded lesson.

The revision process was repeated after the second and third lesson presented to other groups of five peers by other MLS group members.

DATA COLLECTION

In this study, a number of data collection instruments were used as this is believed to contribute to the validity of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Therefore, pre-lesson meetings and revision meetings were recorded to analyze the instructional improvement. The written feedback provided by the instructor and peers and the self-reflections of the presenters centered on the weaknesses of teaching the lesson (Aldemir, 2017; Dudley, 2011). At the end of the last revision meeting, participants were interviewed regarding whether the instruction was perceived to be improved throughout the MLS process. The whole MLS procedure in this study was applied via a digital platform.

Also, a few days after the final revision meeting, the MLS group members were invited to individual semi-structured interviews in Turkish at their convenience. The interview questions prepared in line with the relevant literature (Akbaba Dağ & Doğan Temur, 2018; Fernandez, 2005; Fernandez, 2010; Suryani, 2016) aim to reveal the perspectives of the MLS group members about the major components of MLS (e.g., collaborative lesson planning, observing other MLS group members' lessons, critiquing the recorded lessons, receiving peer feedback, the involvement of the instructor in the MLS process, writing self-reflections, revision meetings). Additionally, interview questions were included to reveal MLS group members' willingness to participate in another MLS, their perceived advantages and disadvantages of MLS in general, their opinions about the integration of MLS into pre-service teacher education (Akbaba Dağ & Doğan Temur, 2018) and the implementation of MLS via a digital platform.

DATA ANALYSIS

The pre-lesson meetings illustrating how the lesson was collaboratively prepared by the MLS group members were summarized, and the issues about the lesson discussed in revision meetings were presented in two categories as weaknesses and revisions made for the next lesson. The weaknesses and revisions agreed by all the MLS group members in the revision meetings were included in the analysis. On the other hand, their perspectives about MLS obtained through the semi-structured interviews were supported by their relevant quotations, and by providing the MLS group members with the findings, respondent validation which is also known as member checking was used as a means of checking whether the researcher's interpretation was accurately presented in accordance with their opinions (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

PRE-LESSON MEETINGS

Before the pre-lesson meetings, the MLS group members had been given necessary information and training by the instructor about key concepts such as LS, MLS and CLIL. Five pre-lesson meetings were arranged at regular intervals to encourage MLS group members to cooperate with each other and with the instructor towards the lesson on the other days. In the first pre-lesson meeting, they were provided with the functions and useful language (e.g., making simple comparisons, talking about past events, vocabulary items such as 'evidence' and 'explore') and language skills (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, listening) in the unit *Planet* in the 7th grade syllabus (MoNE, 2018). The type of activities and visuals, possible sources to use in the process of developing the lesson, ways of integrating skills into the lesson, and possible lesson stages were the major issues of the first meeting. Until the next meeting, MLS group members were requested to brainstorm a list of activities to be discussed in the second meeting.

In the second meeting, the instructor introduced Mohan's (1986) knowledge framework to follow while designing the CLIL lesson for this study. The framework was explained using the guide published by Alberta Education (2007). The following knowledge framework thinking

skills in the guide were presented to the MLS group members: description (e.g., compare, contrast), sequence (e.g., relate, sequence), choice (e.g., form personal opinions, make decisions), classification (e.g., classify, define), principles (e.g., predict, explain) and evaluation (e.g., evaluate, judge). Each knowledge structure and the relevant thinking skills as well as linguistic structures were illustrated through a lesson in the guide about spiders to enable the MLS group members to relate their lesson ideas to Mohan's framework. The following thinking skills and the related linguistic structures given in parentheses were found by the MLS group members to be compatible with the activities they brainstormed: predict (modals used for prediction, phrases such as 'I think'), sequence (clauses of time, simple past tense) and compare (adverbs of comparison).

It was also agreed unanimously in the meeting that the lesson would start with a typical warm-up question (What comes to your mind when you hear the word *Planet*?) and continue with the following three major stages in line with Mohan's (1986) knowledge framework:

1. *Predict*: Students look at two photos of an old and a modern planetarium and try to predict what they are and what they are/were used for. They are also encouraged to make comparisons between the two photos.

2. *Sequence*: Students listen to a text including clauses of time and simple past tense structure about the history of astronomical research and the scientists (e.g., Galileo) who contributed to its development. While listening, they fill in the blanks with the target vocabulary items (e.g., observe, evidence, orbit). The text is followed by a timeline illustrating the photos of scientists and the dates of their major works mentioned in the text. Students look at the timeline and try to remember the names of the scientists. Then, they read the text carefully to answer open-ended questions. Two vocabulary parts follow the open-ended questions. In the first part, students match some of the target words mentioned in the text with the given pictures while some of the other words are matched with their definitions in the second part.

3. *Compare*: Students look at the image of the solar system, read the information about each planet (e.g., temperature) and write ten sentences using the comparative forms of the given adjectives.

In the third meeting, the activities were put into a logical order, and the visuals, skill focus as well as the number of questions/items were determined for each activity. On the other hand, in the fourth meeting, the language in the lesson material was simplified for 7th graders, the visuals were evaluated in terms of clarity and any linguistic mistakes were corrected. Finally, in the fifth pre-lesson meeting, the thirty-minute lesson was rehearsed by the first MLS group member volunteering to present the first lesson.

FINDINGS

REVISION MEETINGS

The written peer/instructor feedback, presenter's self-reflection and the recorded lesson were discussed in the revision meeting held immediately after the first lesson. In line with the first research question (How is instruction in a CLIL research lesson improved throughout the MLS procedure?), Table 1 illustrates the instructional weaknesses agreed upon by all the MLS group members and the relevant revisions made for the second lesson:

Table 1: First Revision Meeting

Weaknesses	Revisions made for the second lesson
Neglecting to openly state the topic of the lesson	Starting the lesson with the following explanation: 'Today, we will talk about planets'
Skipping the timeline following the listening passage because the names of the scientists were difficult to remember	Placing the timeline right before the listening text to use it to prepare peers for the reading text with the question 'Do you know any of these scientists?'
Not enumerating the blanks in the text	Enumerating the blanks in the text
Placing the text and the relevant open-ended questions on different pages	Presenting the text and the related questions next to each other on the page
Including small visuals and fonts	Enlarging the visuals and the fonts and replacing some visuals with bigger ones
Allocating too much time by asking each peer to write ten comparative sentences about the information given in the solar system image	Allocating shorter time for this activity by asking each peer to write only two comparative sentences

As can be realized from Table 1, after the first lesson, necessary revisions were made related to giving information about the topic of the lesson, changing the place and function of the timeline, the enumeration of the blanks in the text, presenting the text and its questions on the same page, enlarging the visuals and fonts and managing the time more effectively. Following the second revised lesson, the same revision procedure was applied. The weaknesses of the second lesson and the revisions made for the third lesson are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Second Revision Meeting

Weaknesses	Revisions made for the third lesson
Not receiving answers about the question 'Do you know any of these scientists?' related to the timeline	Placing the timeline after the open-ended questions about the text including the names of the scientists
Not informing the peers about how many times they would listen to the text	Indicating that the text would only be listened to once
Neglecting to write letters and numbers to help match the pictures with the words	Writing numbers and letters for each item in this part
Having equal number of items in the matching vocabulary activities (i.e., match words with pictures & match words with definitions) because the last item can easily be found	Adding one extra picture/definition for the vocabulary matching parts and indicating that there is one extra item
Including unfamiliar words (e.g., diameter) in the information about the solar system image	Encouraging peers to use dictionaries to look up any new words they encounter

As can be understood in Table 2, revisions considered for the third lesson by the MLS group members were as follows: placing the timeline after the open-ended questions, informing peers about how many times they would listen to the text, adding numbers and letters to the matching items, placing an extra item for the matching parts to make them more challenging and encouraging students to use their dictionaries in case of unfamiliar words.

Following the third revised lesson presentation, the revision process was repeated, and the MLS group members agreed that most of the weaknesses were about the individual presenter rather than the collaboratively designed lesson. For example, the overuse of the same verbal praise (e.g., good, perfect) and ignoring some mistakes deliberately made by the peers were considered as comments pertaining to the personal preferences of the presenter. However, only the following weakness related to the lesson itself was determined by the MLS group members as an issue to be revised in the third revision meeting: the small font size of the information in the solar system image about which peers made comparative sentences.

In addition to the reduced number of lesson-related feedback about the third lesson, MLS group members (e.g., Student Teacher 1: *ST 1*) also made the following comments in the interviews at the end of the third revision meeting about the decreased number of negative feedback and the improved instruction:

ST 1: "If I were the presenter today, the criticism would be centered on my personal teaching style, not on the lesson plan. Since the first lesson, the criticism has decreased and currently we have nearly no criticisms against the lesson."

ST 2: "First, we showed the timeline to our peers before they read the text, and then we showed it after they read the text, but today we showed it after all the reading questions were finished and we were able to use it effectively."

ST 3: "I think the process contributed a lot to the improvement of the lesson. In our first lesson, there were plenty of inadequacies. For example, while the peers could see the reading text, they could not see the relevant questions. For the second lesson, we revised them. Also, we added an extra picture and definition because students could answer the last matching item without any thinking."

Despite feedback about the instructional weaknesses, some strengths were also mentioned by the peers, instructor or the presenters themselves. The following positive issues about the lesson were discussed in the revision meetings: using visuals, recycling the target words with various activities, encouraging active participation, integrating skills and giving example sentences for some activities.

PERSPECTIVES ABOUT MLS COMPONENTS

In the semi-structured interviews, the MLS group members were asked to comment on major components of the MLS process as applied in this study to answer the second research question (What are MLS group members' perspectives about the components of MLS?), and their relevant quotations were presented for each component.

One of the important components of MLS focused on during the interviews was collaborative lesson planning about which the following positive issues were mentioned by the participants: noticing problems, respecting each other during the MLS process and the reduced workload. For instance, *ST 1* underlined that they can notice problems in the lesson thanks to collaborative lesson planning, and *ST 2* highlighted that the process was based on respect. Moreover, *ST 3* held the idea that MLS paved the way for reducing the workload to design the lesson. Conversely, not being able to prepare materials in one's own way was stated as a concern by *ST 1*:

ST 1: "On one hand, as we have different perspectives, it is easier to notice mistakes. On the other hand, one cannot exactly do what he/she wants to do as there are different views."

ST 2: "All of us actually thought of different activities, had different ideas and developed the lesson by respecting each other's views."

ST 3: "Planning the lesson together reduced the workload."

Another component of MLS was observing the other group members while teaching the lesson. Seeing the lesson from different perspectives and correcting the mistakes after the observations were mentioned as advantages by the participants. *ST 1* pointed out that they had the chance to see the lesson from different perspectives by means of observations, *ST 2* indicated that observations were useful in terms of noticing and correcting mistakes, and *ST 3* gave the example of the 'timeline' used in the lesson:

ST 1: "Observing our lesson gave us the opportunity to see what we have developed and to experience it. While preparing the lesson, we had the role of a teacher, and while observing it, we took up the role of a student as well as a teacher."

ST 2: "Lesson observation is very useful because we can see the mistakes and correct these mistakes in our lesson plan."

ST 3: "When you observe, you can say that it should have been like this. For example, we became aware that the timeline was not effective because students were not able to find the answer and made a change about its place in the lesson."

When asked about the recording of lessons for discussion in the revision meetings, the participants touched upon the benefits of this component. For instance, while watching the recording, the lesson can be approached more critically (ST 1) and it presented an idea about what not to do in future teaching practices (ST 2). Likewise, ST 3 mentioned its usefulness in terms of noticing lesson-related problems:

ST 1: "Watching the lesson can help us approach the lesson more critically from an external perspective."

ST 2: "I was able to notice my own mistakes. In my future teaching, I would never make them again."

ST 3: "It is useful to watch the lesson because we sometimes cannot notice the problems during the lesson."

Receiving peer feedback is another component of MLS responded to positively. From the participants' points of view, peer feedback contributed to their personal teaching styles and preferences as well as to the improvement of the lesson:

ST 1: "Peer evaluation of the lesson has benefits in terms of the improvement of the personal teaching preferences and the lesson."

ST 2: "When we look at the lesson from the teachers' perspective, we may not be able to see some issues in the lesson. Peer feedback improved our lesson and personal teaching styles."

ST 3: "There could have been lot of things we could have missed if it had not been their comments."

Moreover, the involvement of the instructor in the MLS process was favored by ST 1 and ST 2. ST 1 stated that the instructor provided them with a professional perspective, and ST 2 argued that the instructor respected them about their decisions in the MLS process. Conversely, ST 3 maintained that the existence of the instructor in the revision meetings caused some tension:

ST 1: "The presence of the instructor provided us with a professional viewpoint which is necessary for the improvement of teaching."

ST 2: "The instructor always respected our decisions and supported us. In our future teaching career, we can make decisions depending on the feedback we received from the instructor."

ST 3: "While teaching, I never thought about the existence of the instructor, but in the revision meetings, I felt a little tense."

When it comes to revision meetings, all the participants expressed their positive remarks because necessary changes were made in the lesson in those meetings. ST 1 made an additional point by explaining the importance of holding revision meetings in the same day a short time after the lesson:

ST 1: "Revision meetings were useful because we came together almost immediately after the lessons. I think it would not have been as effective if these meetings had been arranged one day later."

ST 2: "We saw our peers' comments in these meetings and we revised our lessons depending on these comments."

ST 3: "We structured our lesson plans based on the feedback we discussed in the revision meetings."

Also, after each lesson, the MLS group member who presented the lesson wrote a self-reflection. As far as this component is concerned, ST 1 stated that mistakes can be realized through self-reflections, ST 2 thought of it as 'facing yourself', and ST 3 exemplified this component:

ST 1: "Through self-reflection, one can realize the mistakes and the changes he/she wants to make."

ST 2: "This is actually facing yourself. For example, I planned to give examples for comparative sentences but I forgot it. Writing reflections make you aware of your mistakes."

ST 3: "While writing my self-reflection, I realized that I was a little anxious in some parts of the lesson and were not able to correct some of the mistakes deliberately made by the peers."

As for the implementation of the MLS process on a digital platform, *ST 1* explained that it was practical in terms of issues, such as coming together more easily and recording the lesson clearly. Yet, *ST 2* underlined the benefits of face-to-face education such as establishing eye contact. Similar to *ST 2*, *ST 3* wished for the implementation of MLS in a classroom setting:

ST 1: "The digital platform made it easier to observe, record the lessons and have regular meetings. If we had organized face-to-face meetings, we would not have come together for meetings that easily and would not have such clear recordings."

ST 2: "In lessons conducted on digital platforms, you cannot establish eye contact with the students or carry out various activities."

ST 3: "If it had been in a real classroom environment, it would have been better."

The participants were also asked to make comments on the pros and cons of the MLS process in general. As advantages, *ST1* indicated that MLS made them feel like a teacher. *ST 2* mentioned issues, such as teaching different skills in a short time and creating an interactive student-centered environment. In a similar vein, *ST 3* focused on realizing mistakes, learning how to design a lesson in a group and experiencing teaching:

ST 1: "Although the students we taught were peers, we were able to feel like a teacher."

ST 2: "In a short time, we could teach different skills to the students, and an interactive student-centered environment could be created."

ST 3: "Seeing each other's mistakes, learning how to prepare a lesson together and experiencing teaching are the advantages."

On the other hand, as disadvantages, *ST 1* commented that the peers who attended one of the microteaching sessions did not join the other revised lessons. *ST 2* drew attention to the presentation of the lesson to the peers instead of real students while *ST 3* did not mention any disadvantages:

ST 1: "A group of five different peers attended each of the three lessons and gave feedback but they did not know what kind of improvement we made in the revised lessons. If all the peers who attended an earlier lesson had joined the last lesson, they could have also realized the benefit of the MLS process."

ST 2: "Peers pretended to be children. But it could have been better if the lesson had been taught to real 7th grade students. While teaching, I wondered whether we could have the same responses in different activities from real students. Also, we would not have been able to finish the lesson in thirty minutes with real 7th graders."

Furthermore, pertaining to whether the participants would like to attend another MLS, *ST 1* expressed willingness as it gave the opportunity to gain teaching experience. Similarly, *ST 2* agreed on taking part in another MLS because of feeling more motivated after the MLS experience to attend university lessons offered online during the pandemic. Still, some suggestions were made by *ST 1* and *ST 3*. *ST 1* recommended that a further step could be to present the lesson to real 7th graders and to their English teacher to receive feedback from him/her. Also, *ST 3* stated that they would be busy with university courses and the preparation for KPSS (Public Personnel Selection Examination) in the last year, so MLS should be carried out in the third year as a preparation for final year courses such as the Practicum:

ST 1: "I would attend another MLS study because it helped us experience lots of things such as teaching to a group of peers in a real-like environment. But I think we can teach the revised lesson to a group of real 7th graders in a classroom with the participation of their English teacher to receive feedback from him/her as the person who knows the classroom environment best."

ST 2: "I normally do not very actively participate in my university courses so much. Especially in online lessons, I rarely turn on my microphone and speak out. Thanks to this process, I have

overcome this problem. This was actually my first live lesson as a prospective teacher and I felt motivated to turn on my microphone and speak out. So, I would attend such a project again."

ST 3: "If there is another MLS in the final year, I may not be able to attend it because we will be very busy in the fourth year studying for KPSS and the university courses. It was good to participate in an MLS in the third year because this is a preparation for last year courses such as the Practicum."

Finally, all the participants supported the idea of integrating MLS into the pre-service EFL teacher education programs. *ST 1* indicated that through MLS, pre-service teachers can learn to design shorter lessons, gain teaching experience, understand their weaknesses and receive feedback about the lesson. Furthermore, *ST 2* highlighted the benefit of integrating skills into a short lesson. Finally, MLS was regarded by *ST 3* as an approach preparing prospective teachers to the last year's Practicum:

ST 1: "It should definitely be integrated. Teacher candidates can learn how to prepare a short lesson plan, have teaching experience, see their weaknesses, and receive feedback about issues they cannot realize."

ST 2: "It can be integrated. I have realized that even in a thirty-minute lesson, all the skills can be integrated. I think, in my future teaching life, I can apply MLS."

ST 3: "I think we should integrate it. This was my first teaching, and I was very anxious about next year because we will have the Practicum. But now I am more aware of how I can teach and what kind of things can emerge in a lesson. MLS is a good idea to prepare us for the final year Practicum course."

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to apply MLS into teaching a CLIL lesson collaboratively prepared by three MLS group members. At the end of every microteaching session presented by a different MLS group member to a different group of five peers, revisions were made in the lesson in line with self-reflections of the presenters in addition to peer and instructor feedback (Fernandez, 2005; Fernandez, 2010).

In the first and second revision meetings, the MLS group members revised a number of issues, such as the enumeration of the blanks in the text and adding numbers and letters to the matching items. However, in the final revision meeting, only one negative feedback was considered by the MLS group members as an issue to be revised. Not only the reduced number of revision points but also the MLS group members' perceived satisfaction with their instruction in the third revised lesson revealed the potential of MLS for instructional improvement. This finding corroborates with the relevant literature concluding that MLS can enable student teachers to recognize their instructional problems and overcome these problems properly (Suryani, 2016; Suryani et al., 2017).

It is also argued that LS leads to the improvement of the instruction by means of refining the lessons (Lewis & Perry, 2006; Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006). The improvement cycle embedded in LS has been well documented in the literature (Cerbin & Kopp, 2006; Gutierrez, 2015; Hurd & Licciardo-Musso, 2005; Lewis, 2002). Similarly, it is maintained that MLS including major components, such as the cyclical process of lesson planning, presenting, analyzing and revising the lesson fosters EFL student teachers' reflection skills, life-long learning to teach EFL and their instructional practices (Nguyen, 2020; Suryani, 2016; Suryani et al., 2017; Suryani et al., 2018).

In this study, the following MLS components were generally perceived positively by the MLS group members: planning the lesson collaboratively, observing other MLS group members' lessons, the involvement of the instructor in the MLS process, writing self-reflections, analyzing the recorded lessons and revision meetings. To illustrate a similar finding in the

literature in terms of collaborative lesson planning, the usefulness of preparing a joint lesson plan in MLS was agreed upon by the majority of student teachers as a means of broadening their knowledge of teaching the lesson (Suryani, 2016). In another study, the observation component of MLS was found to be helpful for student teachers to become more reflective in their future teaching career (Suryani et al., 2017). On the other hand, as far as the engagement of the instructor in the LS process is concerned, Cajkler and Wood (2016) conclude that LS involved by a mentor was regarded by student teachers as an efficient means of enabling them to improve their knowledge, teaching skills, and teaching confidence.

When it comes to writing self-reflections, Lewis and Tsuchida (1998) assert that teachers should learn to criticize themselves and identify their weaknesses through self-reflections to improve their pedagogical competencies. On the other hand, related to recording the lesson to analyze it in the revision meetings, Mitchell and Reid (2016) point out that the recordings facilitate reflections on different dimensions of teaching, which leads to positive influence on student teachers' professional learning. About the revision process embedded in the MLS process, it was discovered that thanks to the improvement cycles and the revisions in line with feedback, student teachers build up their understanding of teaching concepts and reform-oriented teaching (Fernandez, 2005; Fernandez, 2010).

Additionally, MLS was regarded by the MLS group members as an approach that should be integrated into pre-service EFL teacher education programs. They believed that through the MLS cycles, they were able to notice the problems in their lesson and gain teaching experience in their third year. As also highlighted in the literature, increasing pedagogical skills, understanding of teaching and the awareness about the complex nature of classroom are the benefits of LS and MLS processes (Altınsoy, 2020; Lee, 2008; Suryani, 2016; Yalçın Arslan, 2018). However, some considerations were also expressed by the MLS group members. For instance, regarding the integration of MLS into pre-service EFL teacher education programs, one participant suggested that MLS should be applied in the third grade as in the current study because it can prepare them for last year courses such as the Practicum, and they will be busy with their university courses and the preparation for KPSS in the final grade. The idea of incorporating MLS into pre-service teacher education programs in the third year was also favored by one of the participants in another study due to similar reasons (Akbaba Dağ & Doğan Temur, 2018).

Moreover, the necessity of presenting the lesson to real students instead of peers came to the fore in some interviews. This finding concurs with the result of another study revealing that the most frequent negativity of microteaching is its artificial nature which can prevent student teachers from improving their real teaching skills (He & Yan, 2011). Furthermore, the involvement of the instructor in the MLS process was another concern, and one MLS group member mentioned the existence of the instructor in the revision meetings as a reason for tension. A similar finding is that recording the lesson and the presence of an instructor in the MLS process are causes of stress for pre-service teachers (Akbaba Dağ & Doğan Temur, 2018). Another issue highlighted by one of the MLS group members in this study was that the peers who attended one of the lessons were not able to see the other revised lessons; therefore, it was recommended that the peers who had attended an earlier lesson should have attended the last lesson in order to realize the benefits of MLS.

CONCLUSION

Prioritizing the characteristics of professional development such as planning, implementing, observing and revising the instruction (Cerbin & Kopp, 2006; Hunter & Back, 2011), procedures such as LS and MLS are deemed to be useful for prospective teachers in terms of realizing the dynamic nature of teaching and professional development (Altınsoy, 2020);

consequently, it is advisable to incorporate MLS into pre-service EFL teacher education programs.

However, considerations mentioned by the MLS group members in this study should be taken into account. For example, it is important for the peers who attend the first or second lesson to be invited to the last revised lesson in the MLS process. Moreover, teaching the lesson to real students should be considered for further MLS implementation. The application of MLS in the third year of pre-service teachers is also recommended as a means of preparing them for last year practice-based courses (e.g., Practicum).

The instruction in the thirty-minute CLIL lesson developed for this study was improved by the cyclical process of MLS, and the whole process embodied certain components which were generally responded to positively by the MLS group members. Still, there is a need for a larger body of literature regarding the use of MLS in the field of ELT (Suryani, 2016). For instance, future studies in different EFL contexts can involve a higher number of participants and a longer period of MLS implementation to yield further evidence about the usefulness of MLS in preparing pre-service EFL teachers for their future careers. Also, experimental research studies in which the control group is educated in line with traditional teacher education approaches while the experimental group actively involves in MLS should be carried out. Finally, further research studies can use both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments to reveal the contribution of the MLS process to the improvement of foreign language instruction and teaching skills.

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