



An exploratory study on pre-service teachers' reflective reports of their video-recorded microteaching

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Abstract

The micro-teaching technique has been utilized for more than half a century by teacher education programs with the main aim of providing pre-service teachers with practice opportunities. The flexible nature of the technique makes it possible to adapt the implementation to the peculiarities of any specific context. In addition, the latest technological developments such as smartphones and the internet can also be integrated into the microteaching technique to increase its efficiency. In this study, the participating pre-service teachers have been asked to video-record their microteaching performances and watch their performances several times before they write a reflective report on their performance. The technique of content analysis has been applied in the analysis process of the reflective reports and their perceptions as to their instructional skills have been identified. It has also been observed that, in comparison to traditional implementation of the microteaching technique, integration of smartphone video-recording technology into the microteaching technique has yielded benefits particularly in terms of the feedback stage and improving pre-service teachers' reflective skills.

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Keywords: Microteaching technique; reflective teaching; pre-service teacher education.

1. Introduction

Languages have been learnt and taught since the very beginning of human history; however, the process of foreign language learning, arguably, has gained unprecedented significance in the 21st century. Accordingly, the growing importance of learning foreign languages has led to a deeper concern on the issue of foreign language teacher education. Teaching a language is different from teaching other subjects such as history or science and it is a thorny undertaking as it is "...an intellectual, cultural, and contextual activity that requires skillful decisions about how to convey subject matter knowledge, apply pedagogical skills, develop human relationships, and both generate and utilize local knowledge" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 298). The field of Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) is a well-established discipline and it has experienced a gradual shift away from behaviorism oriented views towards experiential, constructivist and social constructivist views of thinking in the last three decades in that reflective practices and learning from experience have grown in importance throughout the process of pre-service language teacher education, which resulted in a renewed interest in attempts to

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provide pre-service teachers with field experience opportunities such as teaching practice (practicum) and/or microteaching (Wright, 2010).

It is not possible to speak of a balance between theory and practice opportunities in the formation and structure of teacher education programs. On the issue of imbalance in the theory and practice dichotomy, Kerschbaum (2007) argues that teacher education programs, unfortunately, tend to overemphasize either theory or practice and ignore the interrelationship between the two. However, the task of these programs is "...to help teachers learn to make decisions about 'what to do' in their classrooms while at the same time developing an understanding of 'why'" (Kerschbaum, 2007, p. 82). The vital role of practice cannot be ignored for the profession of teaching; therefore, as has been suggested by Greg and Cheng-Chih (2006), providing pre-service teachers with sufficient and appropriate teaching experience should be the main aim of any teacher education program; otherwise, the pre-service teachers are left under-prepared for the profession and they may perceive themselves not competent enough to teach (Mergler & Tangen, 2010). The need to build a bridge between the theoretical courses given by teacher education institutions and school-based field experiences has been underscored by several other researchers (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Dawson, et al., 2003; Erginel, 2006; Kilic, 2010; Mergler & Tangen, 2010; Yost, et al., 2000) and the microteaching technique, thanks to its flexible nature, may readily function as a bridge between theory and practice in any context.

The disproportion between theory and practice is also present and prevalent in the Turkish SLTE context. According to the current instructional program to be followed by the English Language Teaching (ELT) Departments across Turkey, the pre-service teachers, alas, can get the chance of conducting field experiences just before their graduation because their exposure to and integration into real school environment has been delayed until their final year in language teacher education program. As a result, it has been observed that "...most of the pre-service teachers floundered, and they had difficulties coming to terms with dilemmas they faced in schools as observers and/or practicing teachers" (Erginel, 2006, p. 8). The main function of a successful teacher education program should be to provide pre-service teachers with effective didactic strategies and experiences (Ismail, 2011). However, pre-service teachers can achieve limited observation and inadequate practicum opportunities in Turkish context. As a partial compensatory solution for this constraint, it can be argued that the microteaching technique should be integrated with other methodology courses the pre-service teachers take prior to their final year.

1.1. The Microteaching Technique

The history of microteaching technique dates back to 1960s and it was developed at Stanford University with the main aim of training pre-service teachers in a more effective way. Many teacher training institutions have employed the microteaching technique since then in the USA, Europe and some other developing countries (Peker, 2009) and it is currently the most widely employed technique for providing pre-service teachers with practical experience (Amobi, 2005; Chuanjun & Chunmei, 2011; Ismail, 2011). In a typical microteaching session, a pre-service teacher is supposed to prepare a lesson plan on a specific subject and conduct his/her lesson in front of his/her classmates and advisor, which is followed by the evaluation stage. The pre-service teacher may be asked to revise his/her lesson plan in line with the feedback provided by his/her classmates and advisor and re-conduct his/her lesson. Therefore, it can be argued that microteaching involves a cycle of teaching and evaluation processes (see Figure 1.).

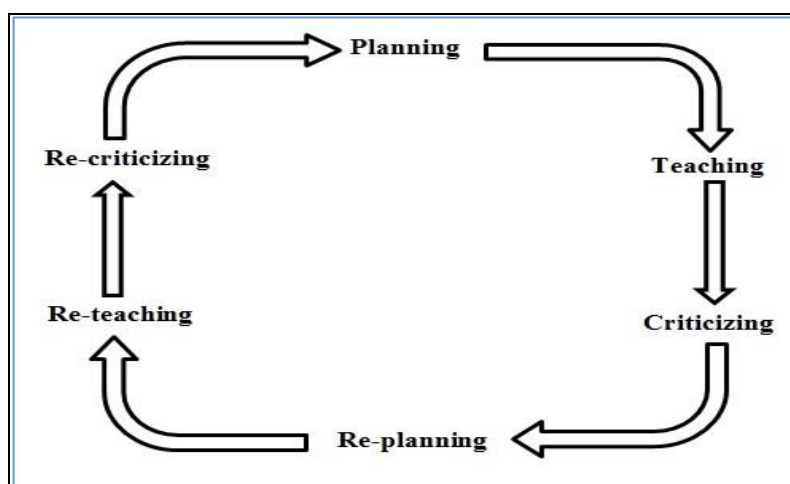


Figure 1. Stages of Microteaching (Saban & Çoklar, 2013, p. 235).

To be more specific, the pre-service teachers are expected to identify the desired behaviors and specify related objectives at the planning stage. At the teaching stage, the lesson plan is put into practice in the microteaching classroom which is usually populated by their classmates acting as the target student population. At the stage of criticizing, the performance of the pre-service teacher is analyzed and assessed by his/her observer teacher and his/her classmates. This stage is of utmost importance because feedback as to the performance of the pre-service teacher is provided in this phase. In addition, if the performance has been video-recorded, the recording may be watched again and again and the feedback may be supported with the evidence from the recording. Then, for the re-planning stage, the pre-service teacher is asked to prepare a new lesson plan in line with the feedback provided. This revised plan is again implemented to a, preferably different but comparable, group of students at the re-teaching stage. Finally, at the re-criticizing stage, the performance of the pre-service teacher is observed and evaluated by his/her teacher and classmates. The traditional implementation of the microteaching technique is conducted in this way; however, it should not go without saying that some stages of this framework may be modified or skipped due to limitations mandated by the context such as overcrowdedness and lack of time. In any case, the main strength of the microteaching technique lies in the fact that "...the normal complexities of the classroom are drastically curtailed and immediate feedback on performance can be given" (Kpanja, 2001, p. 483). Therefore, it becomes possible to focus on selected instructional aspects of a pre-service teacher's performance and feedback as to that selected aspect can be provided.

1.1.1. Benefits of microteaching technique

As the normal complexities of an actual classroom are limited in the microteaching technique, pre-service teachers get the opportunity to transform their theoretical repertoire into practice and action during the microteachings they conduct (Benton-Kupper, 2001; Ismail, 2011). As has been argued by Bell (2007), pre-service teachers gain valuable teaching experience and become more aware of the interrelationship between theory and practice. In addition, pre-service teachers are expected to improve their lesson planning and decision-making skills as well as strengthening their self-confidence for teaching (Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2011; Kilic, 2010; Subramaniam, 2006). The idea of teaching in front of their advisor and classmates and being video-recorded for the following evaluation process leads to anxiety for many pre-service teachers; however, as has been reported by Erginel (2006) and Şen (2009), the intensity of anxiety the pre-service teachers have experienced in their first-time teaching has gradually decreased in their subsequent microteaching performances and the microteaching technique has helped them improve their self-confidence. Additionally, the results of the study conducted by Aarsal (2014) clearly demonstrate that the microteaching technique has a positive influence on the self-efficacy

perceptions of the pre-service teachers. The microteaching technique makes it easier to identify and rehabilitate the problematic aspects of a pre-service teacher's instructional skills as well (Kpanja, 2001).

In the implementation of the microteaching technique, pre-service teachers need to prepare lesson plans, decide on instructional goals, be able to attract their students' attention, manage the classroom and time effectively, put their lesson plan into practice, ask and answer questions and assess their own and their peers' performances. In short, thanks to the microteaching technique, pre-service teachers get the chance to prepare for their future roles as teachers and experience the realities of the profession of teaching (Önal, 2017). As a result, the microteaching technique will raise their awareness of their future profession. Another benefit of the microteaching technique is its context-adaptable nature in that it is possible to modify the components of the microteaching technique in response to the peculiarities of a specific context such as video-recording the performances of the pre-service teachers or providing alternative forms of feedback, which renders the microteaching technique highly flexible and practical (Benton-Kupper, 2001).

Furthermore, the microteaching technique has also been highly valued by pre-service teachers who get involved in the process. For instance, Ogeyik (2009) conducted a study with the aim of investigating the attitudes of pre-service language teachers towards the microteaching technique in Turkish context and concluded that the microteaching technique proved useful for improving pre-service teachers' reflective practices and teaching strategies. In a similar vein, Sariçoban investigated the beliefs of pre-service teachers as to the implementation of the microteaching technique and concluded that "...the micro teaching practice is useful for student teachers to reduce their deficiency in teaching skills and help these teacher candidates to develop much more positive attitudes towards their future professions" (2016, p. 166). In another study conducted in Turkish context, Seferoğlu (2006) revealed that pre-service teachers call for more opportunities to transform their theoretical base into practice via microteaching technique. The urgent need for more microteaching and practice opportunities has been repeated in several other studies by Erozan (2005) and Coskun & Daloglu (2010) in Turkish context.

The importance of preparation, organization, presentation, and evaluation is better appreciated by the pre-service teachers as a result of the microteaching technique (Kilic, 2010). The contribution of reflection and peer-feedback has been acknowledged by the participant pre-service teachers in another study that focuses on the microteaching technique (Fernandez & Robinson, 2007). There exists a close interrelationship between the microteaching technique and reflection in that microteaching experiences help pre-service teachers improve their reflection skills and reflection enables pre-service teachers to develop their performance in subsequent microteaching experiences (Liakopoulou, 2012). In a similar vein, "microteaching has the potential to promote reflexivity, enabling the fledgling teacher to review their set of priorities and renegotiate their position with regard to their previous, taken for granted attitudes, values and assumptions" (I'anson, et al., 2003, p. 197).

1.1.2. Disadvantages of microteaching technique

It should be acknowledged that there is no technique or method that can serve equally well to all the stakeholders. To start with, the audience in a typical microteaching lesson is the classmates of the pre-service teacher rather than real students, which renders the whole experience highly artificial and this artificiality has been labeled as the main drawback of microteaching technique (Chuanjun & Chunmei, 2011; Ismail, 2011). More specifically, the questions asked to the pre-service teacher throughout the microteaching process may not represent those that would be asked in a real classroom. As the audience is expected to have mastered the subject aimed to be taught during the microteaching, it would not be possible to check if the pre-service teacher has really achieved to teach his/her subject. Moreover, it would also be difficult to assess the classroom management skills of the pre-service teacher in a reliable way because the audience is not real students but his/her classmates. Despite these constraints that add

to the artificiality of the microteaching technique, “microteaching and field experiences have become accepted methods of introducing preservice teachers to the realities of teaching and the roles of teachers” (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 212). Another problem with the microteaching technique is limited time and opportunity for each student to perform (Chuanjun & Chunmei, 2011). The duration of the microteaching technique is usually less than that of an actual instruction, which may also result in a distorted view of the performance of the pre-service teacher. The pre-service teachers may not demonstrate their actual didactic skills within 20-30 minutes; however, if they can conduct more than two or three microteachings throughout a semester, the results of their performance assessment will probably become more reliable.

1.1.3. Microteaching technique and video-recording

The rapid and ever-evolving transformation of technology leads to the emergence of new learning media; as a result, as has been observed by Schleppegrell (2007), many teachers constantly struggle to keep up with this trend to cater for their technology-savvy students. In an effort to catch up with the developments in technology, integration of the latest technology such as smartphones and the internet into the microteaching technique has been advocated on the basis that pre-service teachers will be able to embrace the challenges required by the 21st century and accommodate themselves to further possible changes in educational technologies (Thomas, 2013). To be more precise, in a traditional microteaching session, pre-service teachers receive feedback immediately after they complete their performances. Accordingly, due to time constraints, the feedback tends to be limited in nature. As a result, pre-service teachers may not have sufficient time to reflect on their performance. In response to these limitations, Greg and Cheng-Chih (2006) argue that video-recording the microteaching performances of pre-service teachers enables them to assess their personal teaching style in a more effective way because they can get access to their recorded teaching performances easily as well as getting more concrete feedback from multiple sources by sharing their performances with their peers and learning new strategies and techniques from their peers’ performances. In addition, the pre-service teachers’ receptivity to feedback is enhanced as a result of the microteaching technique (Wilkinson, 1996) and, as a consequence, subsequent positive changes in their self-perceptions, behavior and performance can be achieved. It should not be forgotten that the technology of video-recording offers a permanent record of pre-service teachers’ performances and it allows them to play the record again and again as well as pausing or rewinding to focus on different aspects or stages of their performances. In other words, rather than relying solely on their memory, the pre-service teachers can view their videos to reexamine what happened throughout their performance in the class. Furthermore, having the chance to watch their own and their peers’ performances enables pre-service teachers to see their strengths and weaknesses clearly, which will also contribute to a great extent to their future performances (Saban & Çoklar, 2013).

The incorporation of video-recording into the microteaching technique has been reported to yield countless other benefits. To start with, Kpanja (2001) has reported that a meaningfully significant progress in terms of their didactic skills has been observed in the group whose performances have been video-recorded compared to the group whose performances have not been recorded. Therefore, it has been recommended by Kpanja (2001) and Young (1968) that teacher training institutions combine video recording and microteaching technique throughout pre-service teacher education programs. According to Davis (2009), viewing the video-recordings of their performance will be a powerful and invaluable experience for pre-service teachers in that they will be able to analyze the dynamics of their classroom, evaluate the precision of their perceptions of their instruction and pinpoint the aspects of the lesson that went well or that need revision. The results of the research conducted by Benton-Kupper (2001) clearly show that students perceive the incorporation of video-recorded microteaching experience into a pre-service teacher education program as highly beneficial in that video-recording has enabled them to receive the feedback in a more effective way and triggered reflection. In a similar fashion, Santagata, et

al. (2007) concludes that “video provided the opportunity to slow down the teaching process and reflect in ways not possible during live observations” (p. 138). O’Connor (2011) even suggests uploading the video-recordings on a common forum (such as youtube.com) so that the performance of the pre-service teachers can also be viewed and commented on by their peers. Video-based self-assessment is argued to offer valuable information as to the instructional skills of the learners by allowing them to watch and evaluate their performance as often as they like and to monitor their professional development (Struyk & McCoy, 1993). When pre-service teachers watch their recorded performance and write a critique, they will be able to improve their self-analysis, self-assessment and reflection skills (Amobi, 2005). The use of smartphones for recording and watching videos is especially important here in that the pre-service teachers will have the chance to play back and re-view any part of their performance, which will contribute greatly to the objectivity and reliability of their reflective analysis. The practicality and effectiveness of video-recorded microteachings in contributing to pre-service teachers’ professional development has been echoed by Savas (2012) in Turkish context as well.

Integrating video-recording technology into education is not without its critics, though. Linman (1980) warns against the ‘cosmetic’ effects of video-recording because the behaviors of the pre-service teachers may tend to become artificial if they are aware that they are being video-recorded. In a similar vein, Frager (1985) puts forward that Hawthorne Effect (also called Observer Effect), which refers to people’s tendency to improve their performances when they know that they are being observed, may be responsible for the majority of positive results reported by several studies (see Figure 2). In addition, being recorded may make some pre-service teachers feel more anxious at the beginning; however, as has been reported by Donnelly & Fitzmaurice (2011) and Kilic (2010), a majority of pre-service teachers who experience a great deal of anxiety start feeling more comfortable in their subsequent experiences.

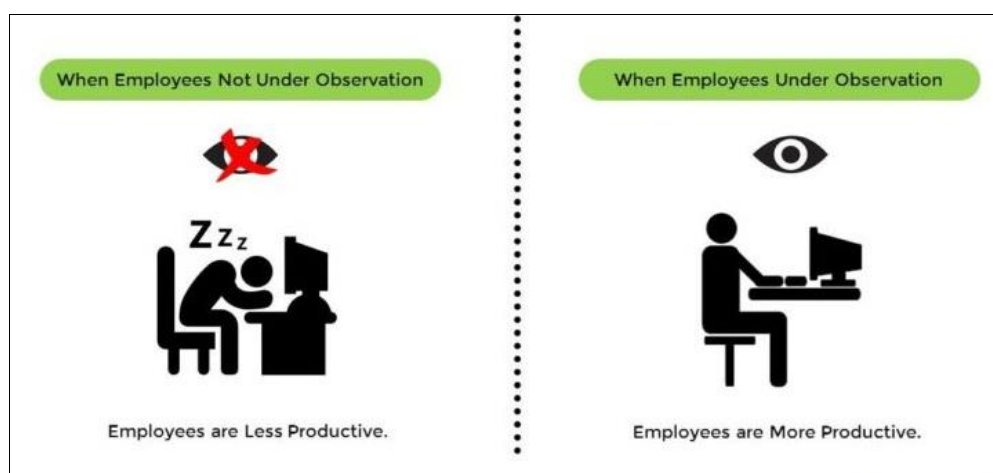


Figure 2: Hawthorne Effect Infographic (<https://mbalearner.com/hawthorne-effect/>)

In any case, rather than evaluating a pre-service teacher’s learning and competence via what s/he has written on a piece of paper, basing the evaluation on his/her actual performance will possibly yield more reliable results. Integration of video-recording into pre-service education enables self-report, self-assessment and self-reflection because learners can analyze, reflect on, evaluate and improve their didactic skills. To sum up, Yamagata-Lynch (2005) maintains that both pre-service and in-service teachers should be provided with innovative training and support in employing technology as a problem-solving tool throughout their professional lives. Sherin has envisaged that “...teacher education will continue to rely on video as an important means of instruction and evaluation; in fact, the field’s emphasis on video may even increase” (2004, p. 2). Accordingly, latest technology has gained increasing importance in the field of education in that almost all students own smartphones that can record videos

for a considerable amount of time and upload them on the internet as well as being able to watch and comment on their peers' videos.

1.2. Reflection

Definitions of the term 'reflection' abound in the relevant literature; however, in accordance with the rationale of this study, reflection can be defined as "the process of making sense of one's experiences by deliberately and actively examining one's thoughts and actions to arrive at new ways of understanding oneself as a teacher" (Freese, 1999, p. 898). In a similar vein, reflective teachers "...can look back on events; make judgments about them; and alter their teaching behaviours in light of craft, research, and ethical knowledge" (Valli, 1997, p. 70). Therefore, a reflective teacher is supposed to base his/her instructional decisions on a careful consideration and conscious awareness of the underlying assumptions as well as the educational, technical, and ethical outcomes of these decisions (Yost, et al., 2000). It should be noted that making an effort to understand past experiences and linking them to future professional identity have been highlighted by these definitions. On the issue of building a bridge between the past and future actions, Schön (1987) conceives of reflection in three modes; namely, *reflection-on-action* for past actions conducted by the practitioner, *reflection-in-action* for reflection while the action is still going on, and *reflection-for-action* as a guide or preparation for future actions. Reflection-for-action can be seen as a natural outcome of the first two modes of reflection. All these forms of reflection are regarded as essential components of reflective practice and pre-service teachers need to improve their skills in these three modes of reflection.

Reflective thinking has been labeled as an essential skill to identify, analyze, and solve the sophisticated problems characteristic of the 21st century educational arena (Thomas, 2013). The necessity of developing reflective skills of both the students and the teachers has been underlined by various commissions, foundations, boards and states (Rodgers, 2002). Likewise, reflective teaching is regarded as one of the desirable goals of effective teacher education programs (Amobi, 2005; Freese, 1999; Loughran, 2002; Şahin & Övez, 2012; Wright, 2010). According to Yost, et al., "teacher educators must find ways to imbue preservice teachers with the intellectual and professional experiences necessary to enable them to reflect on critical levels" (2000, p. 40). In a similar vein, Seferoğlu argues that teacher education programs "...should promote reflective abilities of prospective teachers including observation, analysis, interpretation and decision making" (2006, p. 376).

In traditional teacher education, teachers are viewed as passive recipients of transmitted knowledge; however, teachers play the main role in the process of construction of meaning and the role of reflection should not be disregarded throughout this process (Crandall, 2000). Thus, according to Crandall, the missing component of language teacher education is "...recognition of the role that the teacher plays in generating knowledge through teaching experience and reflection (conscious recollection and evaluation of that experience)" (2000, p. 39). Accordingly, pre-service teachers should focus on 'what' and 'why' questions rather than just 'how' questions in their education. It should not go without saying that providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to reflect on their performance enhances the success and efficiency of the microteaching technique (Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Thomas, 2013). Greg and Cheng-Chih (2006) underscore the necessity of providing instructive and constructive feedback to learners by claiming that properly delivered feedback prompts self-reflection on the part of the students. It should not be forgotten that the recipients of the feedback at this stage will eventually become the providers of feedback and the nature of the feedback provided will have an influence on the delivery of correction skills of pre-service teachers.

Another benefit of reflective practice lies in the fact that it can assist practitioners in linking theory with practice (Altınay & Altınay, 2012; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007). Practitioners' problem solving,

decision making and self-assessment skills as well as their ongoing professional development processes are enhanced with the help of reflection (Fernández, 2010; Yost et al., 2000). Reflection enables teachers to observe and understand the events that happen throughout the lesson, to produce an atmosphere that encourages critical and creative thinking in the classroom, to manage their own professional development and to adjust their practices to the latest innovations and concepts in the field (Kilic, 2010). In other words, the practitioner gains more awareness as to his/her feelings and ideas as well as engaging in inquiry, analysis and evaluation as a result of reflective practice (Erginel, 2006).

A controversial issue that arises at this point is whether it is possible to teach the skill of reflection to pre-service teachers. According to Yost et al., "...most, if not all, preservice teachers can be brought to reach increasingly higher levels of thinking by being challenged with opportunities for learning and practicing this skill" (2000, p. 45). This assertion has been echoed by I'anson, et al. (2003), who argue that student teachers improve their competency as reflective practitioners if they are provided with opportunities to ponder over their teaching in appropriate social contexts. In addition, reflection will also enable pre-service teachers to seek ways of continuing their professional development when they become in-service teachers (Bailey, 2009). Therefore, it can be concluded that even when reflection is an unfamiliar practice for the students, they can improve their reflective skills as long as they are provided with opportunities to think critically and creatively.

All in all, the microteaching technique is not without its limitations despite its practicality and popularity. Especially in contexts where the number of pre-service teachers is too high, the time devoted to each pre-service teacher becomes limited and some stages of the microteaching technique (such as the feedback stage) have to be skipped. Considering the importance of the feedback session in the microteaching technique and 'lack of practice opportunities' frequently expressed by pre-service teachers in Turkish context, it can be argued that there exist serious problems in the implementation of the microteaching technique. Bearing these problems in mind, it has been reasoned by the researcher that video-recording microteaching performances and asking pre-service to write a reflective report by watching their performance several times may alleviate at least some of these problems. More specifically, the limitations related to the feedback session may be greatly reduced by encouraging pre-service teachers to watch their performances several times and write a reflective report on it. In this regard, this study bears the characteristics of an action research. As a final note, although the problems and solutions may seem to be context-specific, the basis of this study may generate similar applications in different contexts.

1.3. Research Questions

Pre-service English Language Teachers who took the 'Teaching of Language Skills' course in the 2017-2018 Academic Year Spring Semester have participated in this research. The aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the consequences of integrating video-recording into the microteaching technique by asking participants to write reflective reports on their performance. The participants' reflective reports as to their microteaching performances have been utilized as the data collection tool. Accordingly, this research aims to answer the following research questions:

R.Q.1. Does video-recording enhance the efficiency of the microteaching technique with a specific view to feedback session?

R.Q.2. What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers as to their microteaching performances?

2. Method

The main aim of this study is to arrive at an understanding of how pre-service teachers perceive their microteaching performances after watching their own video-recorded performance several times. Accordingly, this study also aims to ascertain if it is possible to avoid the problems encountered during the feedback session of the microteaching technique by video-recording the performance of the pre-service teachers and asking them to write reflective reports after watching their performances several times. Therefore, a qualitative research design has been employed in this research and ‘content analysis’ has been utilized in the analysis process of the data gathered from the reflective reports of the participants.

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study are pre-service English Language Teachers who took the ‘Teaching of Language Skills’ course given by the researcher throughout the Academic Year of 2017-2018 Spring Semester in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department, Faculty of Education, Suleyman Demirel University. The number of students who took the course was 40 and all of them volunteered to participate in the study. The research pattern of this study is qualitative; accordingly, although characteristics of the participants such as gender and age have not been utilized in the analysis of the findings, Table 1. displays demographic data of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Participants.

	19-20	21-22	23-24	Total
Male	1	5	4	10
Female	4	16	10	30
Total	5	21	14	40

As shown in Table 1., 10 (25%) of the participants are males whereas the rest 30 (75%) are females. The ages of the participants range between 19 and 24 and more than half of the participants are 21-22 years old.

2.2. Instrument(s)

In line with the aim of the study, the participants have been asked to write reflective reports as to their microteaching performances after watching their performance several times. First of all, the participants are requested to express their ideas on the integration of video-recording into the microteaching technique. More specifically, the participants are asked to give their opinions on whether the application of video-recording enhances the efficiency of the feedback session of the microteaching technique. Subsequently, for the reflection report, the participants are asked to provide their opinions for the following three questions:

1. what did I intend to do in this lesson?
2. what did I do?
3. what would I do differently if I were to teach this lesson again?

In line with the framework developed by Smyth (1989) for analyzing reflectivity, the first question enables pre-service teachers to *describe* their intentions at the lesson planning stage. In a similar way, the second question encourages pre-service teachers to *inform*; in other words, they analyze the whole sequence and try to identify what went well and what did not go so well throughout their performance.

Finally, the last question urges pre-service teachers to *confront* and *reconstruct* their performance. More specifically, the pre-service teachers need to assess all the aspects of their performance and modify their weaknesses in response to this question.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

As a requirement of the ‘Teaching of Language Skills’ course given by the researcher throughout the Academic Year of 2017-2018, the pre-service teachers who took the course were asked to conduct a microteaching on the teaching of a pre-specified language skill. Furthermore, their microteaching performance and the short feedback session that followed the performance were video-recorded via the performing student’s smartphone. Then, the pre-service teachers were asked to watch their performances several times focusing on everything that went on in the classroom throughout their performance and write a reflective report answering the above-mentioned three questions. They were requested to send their reports to the e-mail address of the researcher till the end of the semester.

2.4. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the participants’ reflective reports, ‘content analysis’ method of the qualitative research paradigm has been employed. The method of content analysis has been defined as “... a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data” (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p. 475). Therefore, first of all, the reflective reports of pre-service teachers have been read, compared, and reread repeatedly and emerging codes have been identified and classified. Following the classification process, sub-themes have been pinpointed and organized into broader major themes. Major themes gathered as a result of content analysis are as follows:

1. problems in implementing what has been planned
2. content of the activities
3. classroom management
4. use of materials
5. correction strategies
6. artificiality of classroom context
7. anxiety experienced by pre-service teachers

In the following part of this study these major themes have been discussed and the sub-themes have been provided under related major themes. In addition, some excerpts from the participants’ reflective reports have also been included with the aim of supporting and exemplifying the interpretations of the researcher. It should also be noted that the comments of the participants have been inserted verbatim; therefore, mistakes, if there are any, belong to the particular participant. Additionally, for reasons of confidentiality, instead of exposing the names of the participants, each participant has been tagged with a number.

3. Results & Discussion

The first research question aims to identify if video-recording enhances the efficiency of the microteaching technique with a specific view to feedback session. All the pre-service teachers who participated in this study believe that effectiveness of the microteaching technique has been boosted as a result of integration of video-recording into the process. The following comments by some of the pre-service teachers substantiate the facilitative role of video-recording in the microteaching technique.

** It is a very nice and good thing that we have the opportunity to record our performance and have a chance to watch it later. We have also a chance to watch it even after a long time and we can see our mistakes and also can fix them not to make the same mistake again. (Student 7)*

** In my opinion, my mistakes are normal currently. I saw them thanks to my video because I was very anxious during the microteaching and I remember very little about it. I saw my mistakes in detail on the video. (Student 9)*

** Watching yourself with a critical view is really important. We will be a teacher. If we recognize the wrongs, we don't repeat them. (Student 19)*

** First of all, I want to say that recording video and assessing it helped me to see good and bad sides of my teaching style. (Student 23)*

** I'm glad that we recorded the videos and had the opportunity to monitor ourselves. There are many little details that we might miss during the microteaching so it is always good to assess our strengths and weaknesses after the lesson. (Student 30)*

Functioning as an expansion for the first research question, the second research question aims to arrive at an understanding of the perceptions of pre-service teachers as to their microteaching performances with the help of the video-recordings. In the following part of this article, major themes that emerged as a result of the content analysis are discussed in more detail.

3.1. Problems in Implementing What has been Planned

The first step in the microteaching technique is planning a lesson on a pre-specified language skill or area. Subsequently, the pre-service teachers are expected to conduct their microteaching in accordance with their lesson plans. However, many of the pre-service teachers state in their reflective reports that they had problems in implementing what they planned. The following excerpt from the report of one of the pre-service teachers exemplifies the difficulty experienced.

** Before I conducted my microteaching, I prepared a lesson plan. But when I started teaching my students, my plan did not work because I had planned for a more silent and quick group of students. I allocated 10 minutes for one activity but they could not finish the activity and it took 20 minutes. My biggest weakness was planning the lesson. (Student 26)*

When designing a lesson plan, the contextual peculiarities such as the ages, interests and proficiency levels of the students, the population of the classroom as well as availability of technical and technological equipment need to be taken into consideration. It should not be forgotten that a carefully and skillfully prepared lesson plan is a prerequisite for an efficient period of instruction. Especially for novice teachers, a properly prepared lesson plan will contribute greatly to the self-confidence of the teacher. Therefore, the integral role played by the lesson plan in the delivery of instruction has been recognized by the pre-service teachers who participated in this study and lesson planning has been regarded as an important didactic competence.

3.1.1. Sequence of activities

Preparing a lesson plan involves making decisions on various aspects taking the contextual peculiarities into account. An important consideration at this point is deciding on the order or sequence of the activities. In general, a lesson plan should start with a 'warm-up' section, which is followed by the 'presentation' of the new topic. Subsequently, a 'practice' section is included with the aim of providing the students opportunity to internalize the new topic. Finally, in the 'production' section, learners are expected to put their productive skills into action and be able to use the new topic in their output. This frame has been labeled as the 'PPP' sequence. However, in some cases the teacher may also decide to start his/her lesson directly with a 'practice' or 'production' activity by skipping the stage of 'presentation' and only incorporate the 'presentation' stage if it is actually needed by the learners. In a similar way, the strategy of moving from the simple (known) to the more complex (unknown) has been the established practice in the field of foreign language teaching. Accordingly, many of the pre-service teachers have called attention to the difficulties they encountered when deciding on the order of

the activities and a few of them have even reported that they would change the order of the activities if they had the chance.

3.1.2. *Transitions between activities*

In addition to deciding on the order of the activities, a teacher also needs to pay attention to the transition between the activities. More specifically, each activity should pave the way for the following activity and contribute to the learners' readiness for the upcoming activity. To achieve this, there should be smooth transitions between and among the activities. Otherwise, the learners may get confused and their level of motivation may decrease, which may lead to a loss in the overall benefit and efficiency of the activity. The analogy of shifting gears while driving may be useful to appreciate the significance of smooth transitions. As a result of the content analysis, it has been found out that some of the pre-service teachers mention the problems they have encountered in their efforts to provide smooth transitions between activities. Therefore, it can be argued that providing smooth transitions between activities has been perceived as an important didactic competence by the pre-service teachers who participated in this study.

3.2. *Content of the Activities*

The content of the activities is a determinant factor for the overall effectiveness of the activity. For this reason, pre-service teachers are frequently advised to consider the level, ages, interests and needs of the learners when designing their lesson plans. Although the learners are not actual students but the classmates of the pre-service teachers who tried to act like real students in the microteaching technique, the necessity of designing proper activities has been echoed by the majority of the pre-service teachers who participated in this study. In fact, the major theme of 'content of the activities' function as an umbrella term consisting of sub-themes such as 'quantity' of the activities, 'level/difficulty and duration' of the activities, whether the topic of the activity appeals to the 'interests' of the learners and the pre-service teachers' 'level of competence' in the content of the activity.

3.2.1. *In terms of quantity*

A variety of contextual factors need to be taken into account when deciding on how many different activities will provide sufficient practice for the learners and how many items there should be in each activity. The linguistic level of the learners and the perceived difficulty of the subject as well as the familiarity of the topic may also influence the decision. Accordingly, deciding on the correct quantity of activities has been specified as a challenge by many pre-service teachers. This can be seen in the following comment by one of the participants.

** In my pre-reading activity, I asked some questions about the topic and also there were some pictures on the board about the topic so first I forced them to try to guess today's topic then I asked them the questions that were related to the topic. In total, I asked them six questions. Now I see that it was inadequate; maybe I should have increased the number of my questions to ten instead of six because students were willing to speak more. (Student 33)*

3.2.2. *In terms of level/difficulty & duration*

In the microteaching technique, the students are not real students but the classmates of the pre-service teachers. Although they try to act like actual learners whose ages and linguistic levels have been specified in the lesson plan, it is not possible for them to be the perfect substitutes of real students in terms of their linguistic level and cognitive maturation. Therefore, the issue of deciding on the level/difficulty and duration of the activities has been regarded as a difficulty by the pre-service teachers. More specifically, the activities are to provide the learners with comprehensible input and they should be suitable for the cognitive developmental levels of the target group of learners. Furthermore, the attention spans of the learners need to be taken into account and the duration of the activities should be determined in line with this. Otherwise, learners may get bored and become disinterested in the activity.

However, many of the pre-service teachers who participated in this study have pointed to the difficulties they have experienced in their reflective reports.

** My activities' order and length was okay. But one of my texts was so long that everybody got bored. The main problem was that I couldn't make connection between my students' level and my activities' level. (Student 21)*

** I asked my students to find examples of figurative language from the text. Overall, I find my presentation a little bit more challenging than required. I would pick an easier text next time. I also noticed that I expected too much from my students. (Student 28)*

** If I had a chance I would change some of my activities. Some of my activities lasted longer than I thought. (Student 33)*

3.2.3. *In terms of appealing to the learners' interests*

A language teacher needs to take the interests of his/her students into account throughout the process of lesson planning. If an activity does not attract the interests of the learners, it will possibly be regarded as boring and learners' participation in the activity will decrease. In line with this, the importance of preparing activities that appeal to the interests of the learners has been perceived by the pre-service teachers who have participated in this study. As can be understood from the following comments, many of the pre-service teachers underscore the correlation between designing interesting activities and the effectiveness of their microteaching performance.

** In my warm-up activity, I gave some cards to the students and asked them to walk around the classroom and ask some questions to each other with one rule 'do not say yes or no' and if they say 'yes' or 'no', they had to give one card to the person who they said it to. They liked it and they laughed so much but the activity was a little bit noisy because everyone was speaking at the same time. This also made the classroom management more difficult. However, I am glad that I designed this activity because my students enjoyed it a lot. (Student 13)*

** The topic of my reading text was 'black holes' and I thought that it sounded interesting. But, unfortunately, my students didn't like the topic and participation was low in my microteaching. I would develop more fun activities if I had another chance because I could see the boredom my classmates experienced in their eyes. (Student 40)*

3.2.4. *Pre-service teacher's competence in the content*

The competence of the teacher in the content s/he is to teach is a highly critical issue because the classroom input, which involves teacher talk to a great extent, may promote fossilization if the teacher him-/herself is not competent enough in the subject or content (Han, 2004). Teacher's competence in the content is also a prerequisite in the process of feedback provision. More specifically, the teacher should be able to detect the errors in the students' production and decide on the appropriate error-correction strategy. The pre-service teachers who participated in this study were not assigned topics by the researcher and they decided on the level and topic for their own microteaching. However, some of the pre-service teachers have underscored problems they have experienced throughout their microteaching in their reflective reports. More specifically, the following comments indicate that they do not perceive themselves as adequately competent on areas such as pronunciation, grammar and unplanned speech.

** I had some problems during the pronunciation worksheet because I had not studied adequately so I was not sure about the correct pronunciation of some words in the activity. (Student 24)*

** One of my students corrected my mistake, it was shameful for me. If I had a chance, I would study my lesson properly and plan it. (Student 31)*

** I couldn't be adequately instructive about the students' questions in my grammar microteaching. It didn't go as planned and I understand that I had to get more prepared for possible questions. (Student 36)*

3.3. *Classroom Management*

The main aim of classroom management is to maximize the efficiency of instruction; therefore, a well-managed class is the place where "...discipline problems are few, and learners are actively engaged in learning tasks and activities; this contributes to the motivational level and expectations for success which the teacher creates in the class" (Richards, 1987, p. 218). The importance of experience cannot

be ignored in the development and mastery of classroom management skills. As the participants of the study are pre-service teachers, classroom management has been frequently highlighted in the reflective reports of the participants. In fact, rather than real students, the classmates of the pre-service teachers tried to feign actual students in the microteaching technique, which comes to mean that the classroom management problems they have encountered during their performances are expected to be minimal in comparison to a real classroom atmosphere. Nevertheless, the participants have identified proper classroom management as a precondition for an effective instruction and the following sub-themes have emerged as a result of the content analysis.

3.3.1. Classroom talk

The main aim of foreign language classes is to improve the learners' communicative skills in the target language. Therefore, in contrast to many other classes, language classes are to be places where communication is of utmost importance and level of noise and interaction is the highest. The students in a language classroom are expected to be able to express themselves, which implies that learners should be encouraged to talk at least as much as the teacher. The interaction should not be limited to the teacher lecturing the whole class; on the contrary, there should also be student initiated interaction and students should be encouraged to speak to each other. In an atmosphere where interaction is so intense and communication is so essential, it is natural that some problems emerge. These problems have been related in the reflective reports of the participants. As can be seen below, the main issues as to the classroom talk are: *instructions by the pre-service teacher, pre-service teacher's body language & eye contact & tone of voice, L1 use, responding to students' questions, and attracting the interest of students & motivating students to participate.*

3.3.1.1. Instructions by the pre-service teacher

Being able to give clear instructions is a crucial skill for a language teacher because if the instructions are not understood or are misunderstood by the learners, the activity or lesson may become chaotic and this will definitely have an impact on the overall efficiency of the instruction. More specifically, the teacher should strive to keep the instructions as simple and concise as possible, and try to make use of extra-linguistic devices to assist the students. If possible, the teacher should also model his/her instructions, break down instructions that involve many steps and constantly check for the students' understanding. Being able to give clear instructions, in fact, is something easier said than done. In this respect, a majority of the participant pre-service teachers emphasized the difficulties they had while they were delivering their instructions despite the extra preparation they had made.

** From my video I came up with the idea that I should simplify the language that I use according to the level of my students. (Student 6)*

** My instructions were not understood properly in some activities because they were not clear enough. If I had the chance, I would prepare my instructions more properly and try to pay attention to everything that went on in the class. (Student 12)*

As can be understood from the comments by the pre-service teachers, the main problem was adjusting the level of the instructions to the level of the students. In a similar line, teacher talk in the classroom should also be attuned to the linguistic level of the learners so that learners can get exposed to comprehensible input, which has a crucial function in the process of foreign language learning.

3.3.1.2. Pre-service teacher's body language & eye contact & tone of voice

Being able to provide the learners with comprehensible input in the foreign language classroom is an important skill for a teacher. To achieve this, a teacher should support his/her verbal communication with extralinguistic and paralinguistic features. More specifically, the teacher should make use of stress and intonation (if required, in an exaggerated fashion) as well as his/her gestures and body language to assist the learners in their struggle to understand the verbal message. The significance of these

extralinguistic and paralinguistic features has been appreciated by the pre-service teachers and several references to these features have been made in their reflective reports.

** Sometimes some of my students did not look at me. I do not why but I looked at them and I had eye contact with them. I monitored them when they were working.* (Student 4)

** While writing the answers on the board, I also read aloud the answers but I realize that I should have read them looking at their faces instead of looking at the board. This was my mistake.* (Student 11)

3.3.1.3. L1 use

It is not possible to speak of a consensus on the issue of native language (L1) use in the foreign language classroom, which “remains a complex and controversial issue” (Ellis, 2008, p. 801). To be more specific, while some foreign language teaching approaches consent to judicious use of L1 in the foreign language classroom (Communicative Language Teaching), some others ascribe no explicit role to the L1 (Task-based Language Teaching) (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). It should be noted that English is not a ‘second’ language but a ‘foreign’ language in Turkish context and English language classroom is, for most of the students, the only place where they can get exposed to English. Therefore, with the aim of providing learners with sufficient comprehensible input, pre-service language teachers have been encouraged to speak English as much as possible in the classroom. This controversial issue has not gone unnoticed by the participants of the study and representative samples of their comments have been presented below.

** I realized after I had watched my video that I should have warned my students to speak only English. They sometimes spoke Turkish but I did not warn them. This was a mistake as a teacher.* (Student 9)

** I had some problems in conducting group work activity because the students began to speak Turkish and they began to talk about things out of the topic of the lesson.* (Student 25)

** I cannot say pair and group works were really effective because the students were speaking in their mother tongue most of the time. I should have prevented that by warning them more.* (Student 38)

3.3.1.4. Responding to students’ questions

An important role of a teacher is to clear and remove misunderstandings and confusion in the minds of the learners by providing helpful and instructive answers to their questions. To do this, the teacher him-/herself should have satisfactory competence in the content s/he aims to teach. If the teacher has not mastered the content s/he is to teach, s/he may experience problems in responding to students’ questions in an effective and instructive manner. Another dimension of this issue is that, most of the time, the teacher may not be prepared for the questions and may not predict what kind of questions will be directed, which renders this issue particularly thorny. As can be seen in the comments below, responding to the students’ questions has been regarded as an important and crucial competence for a teacher.

** My students asked some questions about my pronunciation worksheet, but I had problems answering their questions because I did not study adequately so I was not sure which student was right. If I had a chance, I would study more for possible questions.* (Student 24)

** I couldn't be adequately instructive about students' questions. It didn't go as planned.* (Student 37)

3.3.1.5. Attracting the interest of students & motivating students to participate

Unless a teacher can attract the interest of his/her students and motivate them to participate in the activities, s/he should not expect to achieve his/her instructional goals. The teacher may provide the learners with plenty of comprehensible input; however, for the successful transformation of input into intake, learners, first of all, need to notice the input. In his Noticing Hypothesis, Schmidt (2001) argues that attention and participation is crucial for effective learning. In addition, the teacher needs to have prior knowledge about the ages, needs, interests, and language learning aims/motivational orientations of the students in order to design interesting and motivating activities for them. Accordingly, the

importance of being able to attract the interest of students and motivate them to participate in the lesson has been highlighted throughout the reflective reports of the pre-service teachers.

** In my pre-activity, I couldn't prepare students for my lesson. Firstly, they were short. I thought my subjects were popular but when I try to introduce subjects, they didn't participate. (Student 12)*

** The topic of my lesson was silent letters in English. I tried to teach 3 of them; w, k, b. First of all, I wrote on the board some words with these silent letters and read them. After that I let students to discover the rule. I was a bit disappointed because most of the students didn't want to do that and most of the students were silent. I think that I couldn't motivate them and they didn't like activity. (Student 38)*

3.3.2. Pair-/group-work

Conducting pair-/group-work has now become an integral part of the daily routine for all teachers who aim to maximize genuine communication in language classrooms. As has been highlighted by McDonough & Shaw, “the classroom is clearly a place where people have to work together, essentially requiring a compromise between their own individuality and the dynamics of the whole group” (2003, p. 196). Co-operation and collaboration, rather than competition, is at the heart of this practice and learners are expected to function as members of teams and learn from each other as well as the teacher. However, as can be understood from the comments of the pre-service teachers, the teacher needs to monitor pairs or groups to make sure that they have properly understood the instructions and they communicate in the target language.

** I can't say pair and group works really effective because they were speaking in the mother tongue most of the time. I could prevent that by warning them more if had the chance. (Student 10)*

** Group works are a little bit noisy but I will prefer it for my shy students. In my opinion, since they are working with a group, wanting them to be silent would be meaningless. (Student 18)*

** I had some problems to conduct group works, because the students began to speak Turkish and they began to talk about something out of the lesson. I think that the most important part of the lesson is giving instructions properly, because when the students do not understand what to do, the teacher have serious problem to conduct classroom management. (Student 25)*

3.3.3. Dealing with unplanned events

Unplanned and unexpected events are highly likely to occur in classrooms because neither the students nor the teachers are machines; on the contrary, they have emotions as well as ups and downs. In other words, it is not possible for a teacher to plan and arrange every incident as there are a lot of factors and components that are not under the control of the teacher. Nevertheless, it is essential that a teacher deal with unplanned events in a proper way, have alternative plans for possible problems and manage crisis moments in the classroom. The importance of this skill for a teacher has also been echoed in the reflective reports of the pre-service teachers, an example of which is as follows:

** I think the stage of preparation should be very well planned. Even if you encounter any problems, if you know what you are going to do, you will be able to continue your instruction. If we try to stick to the lesson plan during practice, it is not quite possible and you can better understand it once you have experienced it. Afterwards, it is very important to evaluate yourself, the mistakes you make. Self-criticism will lessen your future mistakes. (Student 8)*

3.4. Use of Materials

The main aim of material development and design is to facilitate and accelerate the process of teaching and learning of foreign languages (Tarakcioğlu, 2012). The proper use of authentic materials will enable learners to link what they learn in the class to real life out of the class as well as exposing them to natural language use (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). As can be understood from their reflective reports, the importance of making use of realia has also been appreciated by the pre-service teachers.

** For the production part, I asked for volunteers and picked 7 students. Each student animated a character from the story with the hand puppets, which I gave to them. This part was their favorite because hand puppets are cute and entertaining. (Student 6)*

** In the play activity, I gave a script of Bremen town musicians. When I compare it with other presentations, designing masks of characters was really helpful for the students. (Student 19)*

3.5. Correction Strategies

An important role of foreign language teachers is to provide learners with corrective and instructive feedback; however, the issue of correction is dependent upon many other sub-skills. The teacher, first of all, should monitor his/her students and notice their mistakes. Following this, s/he needs to decide on whether it should be corrected or not and when, how, and by whom the correction should be done considering several variables such as the level of the students, the atmosphere of the classroom, the aim of the activity among many others. It has been observed from the reflective reports of the pre-service teachers that correction has been regarded as an important competence for a language teacher and their comments as to different dimensions of correction have been presented below.

3.5.1. Monitoring the students on task

Foreign language classes, by their nature, are expected to be more learner-centered in comparison to other subjects such as history or biology. The reason for this is that the teacher is not just the provider of the course content; on the contrary, the teacher is expected to function as a facilitator of communication and a co-communicator (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Accordingly, students are frequently asked to form pairs or groups with the aim of promoting communication. However, during pair or group work activities, some students may digress from the actual objective of the activity and tend to use their mother tongue instead of the target language or misunderstand the instructions of the activity. To prevent such problems, the teacher should move around the classroom and monitor the students to make sure that everyone has understood the instructions properly and is doing what the teacher has asked them to do. In addition, some students may need scaffolding or may have questions in their minds. The teacher should be ready to provide the students with the feedback or scaffolding when needed. To sum up, as can be understood from the following comments, the skill of monitoring the students on task has been considered as an important didactic competence by the pre-service teachers.

** I walked around the classroom and monitored my friends when they were working on their own. Also I asked them if they wanted help to scaffold them. (Student 4)*

** As I stated before, I stood up in front of the class and did not give a careful sight to my students' answers and their speaking during the group-work. I have taken note of this mistake to make myself better. (Student 26)*

3.5.2. Not focusing on students' answers & not noticing students' mistakes

As can be understood from the following comments by the pre-service teachers, some of them had problems in noticing the mistakes of their students throughout their performance. The underlying reason for this is the high level of anxiety and stress for some students and lack of content knowledge for some others. As a pedagogical implication, the researcher feels justified to suggest that foreign language teachers should try to pay attention to and monitor their students' utterances and notice their mistakes if there are any. In addition, if the teacher him-/herself has lacking knowledge about the content of the lesson, s/he should try to perfect his/her competence on the content without delay.

** I planned to give feedback to the students but, after watching the video, I see that I had not caught many important and big mistakes. (Student 22)*

** It was my first microteaching and I prepared everything very carefully. I asked the questions that I prepared to the students but I did not listen to their answers because I was so nervous. I just said 'OK' and I did not correct their mistakes. (Student 29)*

3.5.3. Ignoring students' mistakes

When a teacher notices a mistake in the student's output, s/he may choose to ignore it taking certain factors into consideration such as the aim or rationale of the activity and the gravity of the mistake. If

the mistake is a local one, which does not disrupt intelligibility, and the aim of the activity is fluency, then the mistake may as well be ignored in order not to interrupt the communication process. As can be seen in the following comments, the acceptability of ignoring students' mistakes has been underscored by the pre-service teachers.

** I didn't want to interrupt too much the lesson by correcting my students because it was a drama activity in my micro-teaching. I just corrected them if there is a really big grammar mistake. I didn't say anything if they have a bad accent or pronunciation. In my opinion it is better if we don't interrupt the lesson too much for correcting the students. We must tell their mistakes after the lesson. I think I just wanted to continue the lesson and I didn't want to interrupt the lesson by correcting the students too much. (Student 2)*

** As I watched my presentation again, I saw there were not so many student mistakes. When there was any, I either ignored or corrected without implying a correction as I believe being corrected bothers many students. My error corrections are generally in the form of 'recasts'. (Student 28)*

** The students made some mistakes but I did not care because fluency was more important. (Student 39)*

3.5.4. *Delayed/immediate correction*

Another important decision to be made on the issue of correction is when to correct the mistake. In some cases, the teacher may perform the correction immediately whereas in some other cases, it may be better to wait till the end of the activity or lesson. As can be understood from the comments of the participants, the gravity of the mistake is a determinant factor for this decision and providing enough thinking time after asking a question may reduce the number of mistakes.

** During my microteaching, I had made correction immediately if it is a critical mistake. On the other side, if it was not a critical mistake I waited to finish activity and then I had corrected those mistakes. What I realized during the presentations was that if there was enough time to think on the issues for the students, they make mistake rarely. (Student 15)*

** When the mistake happens, we should correct it at that time. If it is time-out, it will be error. It will take time to correct it. Also our pronunciation must be sufficient to be able to correct them. (Student 31)*

3.5.5. *Teacher-/self-/peer-correction*

When the teacher notices a mistake in the output by a student, if the teacher considers the mistake as one that needs correction, s/he should decide on who will perform the correction. This decision will possibly depend on a myriad of contextual factors such as the nature of the mistake, the particular student who has made the mistake, and the aim of the activity. In some cases, the teacher may, first of all, try to promote self-correction and if the student fails, the teacher may encourage other students to provide the correct form with the aim of fostering collaboration. Teacher-correction may be viewed as a last resort if both of the strategies fail. To sum up, the pre-service teachers have included comments as to who performed the correction throughout their microteaching performances and some of them have based their decisions on pedagogical reasons.

** While completing the story, one of the students made a sentence which was grammatically wrong and I repeated the sentence with the right version of the grammar rule and by stressing it. (Student 13)*

** If they made any mistake, I would wait a few minutes to find it on their own but if they didn't I would give some clues. If they still didn't find it I could tell the correct answer. (Student 21)*

** Of course, the students have some mistakes but I give them a chance for try it again as "Are you sure that it is the right answer? Try again." And the students try it again. I don't give the right answer because I want them to try to find the right answer themselves, I don't want to give the answer directly. (Student 32)*

** Sometimes they gave wrong answers. In that case I asked them to think again and they found the answer. You said to us never to use the word "no" when the students did wrong. I have never used this word yet. (Student 40)*

3.5.6. *Overcorrection*

"Give a small boy a hammer, and he will find that everything he encounters needs pounding" (Kaplan, 1998, p. 28). Moving from this line of reasoning, it can be argued that if a teacher relies on correction too frequently, it may discourage the learners from taking risks and testing the hypotheses

they have formed in their minds. Especially when the main aim is to promote fluency and communication rather than accuracy, the teacher needs to ignore mistakes or provide delayed correction instead of interrupting the speech of students. Some of the pre-service teachers have admitted committing overcorrection during their performance in their reflective reports, which indicates that they have gained greater awareness of the importance of fluency.

** I tried to be careful about correcting the mistakes, so I intervened as much as I could. But I criticized myself again because I did it too often. (Student 8)*

** Generally, I correct their mistakes. While they are answering my questions, I immediately give them correct answer. Actually, sometimes this is not a good idea. I think that I shouldn't do this all the time. Overcorrection is not helpful for students. After all this, they don't want to answer the questions. (Student 23)*

3.6. Artificiality of Classroom Context

In the microteaching technique, the classroom is traditionally populated by the classmates of the pre-service teachers and they try to act as if they were real students at the pre-specified age and linguistic level. As can be expected, it would be unrealistic to expect them to behave perfectly like the target learner group. To be more specific, they may create fewer classroom management problems and exhibit a higher level of linguistic competence than the target learner group specified in the lesson plan. As can be understood from the following comments by the participants, this may be perceived as either a benefit or a drawback by the pre-service teachers.

** In my microteaching the only problem was that students and the classroom were artificial. I mean that it would be better if I had a chance to perform in front of a real classroom in order to see what I can and I cannot do. (Student 1)*

** When I watched my performance again and again, I realized that I did not behave as real teacher. Maybe that was because of being my friends of my students. (Student 17)*

** I asked some questions but there were almost no answers and none of my friends were interested. I don't consider this as a big problem because my real students will be more energetic and responsive. I wasn't happy with my friends' participation and I overreacted a little bit. I should've considered them as my students instead of my friends but I failed. (Student 30)*

** My friends were students in this microteaching. If the students were real, my performance could be inadequate. Classroom management will be more difficult for us in real classes. (Student 35)*

3.7. Anxiety Experienced by Pre-service Teachers

A great majority of the pre-service teachers who participated in this study have emphasized the intensity of anxiety they have experienced throughout their microteaching performances. Understandably, the idea of being evaluated throughout the microteaching technique has led to anxiety on the part of the pre-service teachers (Bell, 2007; Erginel, 2006). Although the researcher tried to calm down the pre-service teachers by providing them with support and advice as to the 'video shock', the intensity and frequency of anxiety experienced by the pre-service teachers and the impact of it on their performance is not surprising as the emotional effects of the experience have been very well documented by Higgins & Nicholl (2003).

As can be gathered from the following comments, the pre-service teachers have tended to attribute their weaknesses in various aspects of their microteaching to their experience of anxiety, which can be interpreted as a clear example of 'attribution theory'. To be more specific, attribution theory argues that "the subjective reasons to which we attribute our past successes and failures considerably shape our motivational disposition underlying future action" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 79). Accordingly, it can be claimed that the pre-service teachers will improve their performances in their future performances since the level of anxiety they experience will diminish.

** They did some mistakes and I also did but I did not have the chance to correct them meantime as I was so anxious and nervous. (Student 1)*

* *Actually in the last stage, they were supposed to use wh- questions, because the objective of my lesson was to teach wh- questions. I forgot to mention this detail during my microteaching and they did not use them. This was the consequence of my anxiety.* (Student 5)

* *As I mentioned before, I couldn't be relaxed and motivated. I was anxious. It affected my classroom management also. I couldn't be so successful on this issue.* (Student 16)

* *The most problematic part was correction in my presentation. I was anxious and I didn't realize my student's mistakes.* (Student 17)

4. Conclusions & Suggestions

The instructional behaviors and practices of teachers can be observed and elaborated on; however, the mental processes that shape and inform the decisions taken by a teacher cannot be observed from outside and only the teacher can explain why s/he has decided to do something rather than something else. Therefore, teacher trainers need to “focus more on the ways in which teachers *think* rather than on the ways in which teachers *behave*” (Sherin, 2004, p. 5). Accordingly, the reflection reports of the participant pre-service teachers have, to some extent, shed light on the inner mental processes that produce specific teacher behaviors. Liakopoulou (2012) has warned against pre-service teachers' tendency to focus on very specific topics when they are to reflect on their performance; however, it has been observed that the participants of this study have not included any irrelevant or overly specific topics in their reflective reports, which indicates that they have understood what has been asked of them. Furthermore, in line with Schön's (1987) tripartite classification of reflection modes, it is possible to argue that many of the pre-service teachers who participated in this study exemplify all three modes of reflection in their reports. More specifically, although most of the comments of the pre-service teachers focus on *reflection-on-action*, many of the pre-service teachers have also made references to *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-for-action* modes of reflection. As a result, it can be argued that the participants have improved their reflective skills thanks to this study because a good and effective way of developing reflective skills is to provide the practitioners with opportunities to practice this skill.

The findings of this study clearly indicate that the integration of video-recorded microteaching technique into teacher education programs brings about many other benefits. For example, pre-service teachers have increased their self-confidence and started to feel gradually less anxious throughout the experience, gained insight into their didactic skills, received feedback from multiple sources, got the chance to see themselves ‘in action’ with the help of video-recording, and added to their own repertoire of didactic skills by observing their peers' performances. It should not go without saying that the microteaching technique has helped pre-service teachers grow as teachers although it has been conducted in an artificial context. In addition, video-recording their microteaching performances via their smartphones allowed pre-service teachers to improve their self-reflection skills to a great extent by watching their microteaching sessions anywhere and anytime because reflection was not based on their memory alone. They managed to pinpoint the areas on which they need to improve themselves.

The video recordings displayed student-student interactions as well as teacher-student interactions so that the pre-service teachers have been able to focus on how well pair-/group-work went on throughout the experience. Furthermore, by sharing their recordings with their peers, they were able to learn from their peers by commenting on and evaluating their performances. Another positive benefit of the experience is that the pre-service teachers became more prudent and experienced in the management of unplanned and unexpected events that emerged during their performance. With the help of these incidents, they improved their spontaneous decision-making skills. In contrast to traditional microteaching technique, in which feedback consisted of broad and superficial comments, feedback

became more concrete and directed at specific areas. As a result, it has become easier for the pre-service teachers to perceive and appreciate the feedback in a better way.

As a final note, an interesting finding that has attracted the attention of the researcher is that, except for few participants who alluded to the importance of communication, a great majority of pre-service teachers have not written anything about the language teaching approach/method they have employed throughout their microteaching performance. The participants of the study took *Methodology* courses for two semesters in the previous year; however, they have not included any remarks on the method they have adopted. The reason for this may be that they have tried to focus on instructional fundamentals such as classroom management or error correction and methodology ranks as a superior theme for the students. After they master the fundamentals, they will be ready to focus more on their methodological skills. Alternatively, the reason may be that the pre-service teachers have not adopted any of the specific approaches/methods; instead, they have employed what Kumaravadivelu (1994) labeled as ‘*principled pragmatism*’. Whatever the underlying reason, one would expect to see some commentary as to the methodology employed by the pre-service teachers in their reflective reports.

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Hizmet-öncesi öğretmenlerin görüntü kaydı yapılan mikroöğretimleri için hazırladıkları yansıtıcı raporları hakkında bir keşif araştırması

Öz

Mikroöğretim tekniği, öğretmen adaylarına uygulama olanakları sağlamak amacıyla, öğretmen eğitimi veren programlar tarafından yarım yüzyıldan fazla bir süredir kullanılmaktadır. Tekniğin esnek yapısı, uygulamanın herhangi bir özel bağlamın özelliklerine uyarlanmasını mümkün kılar. Bununla birlikte, akıllı telefonlar ve internet gibi en son teknolojik gelişmeler, verimliliğini artırmak için mikroöğretim tekniğine dahil edilebilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, katılımcı öğretmen adaylarından mikroöğretim performanslarını video kaydı yapmaları ve performanslarını yansıtıcı bir rapor yazmadan önce performanslarını en az birkaç kez izlemeleri istenmiştir. Yansıtıcı raporların analiz sürecinde içerik analizi tekniği uygulanmış ve katılımcıların öğretmenlik becerilerine ilişkin algıları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, mikroöğretim tekniğinin geleneksel uygulamasına kıyasla, akıllı telefon video kayıt teknolojisinin mikroöğretim tekniğine dahil edilmesinin özellikle geri bildirim aşaması ve öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcı becerilerinin geliştirilmesi açısından faydalar sağladığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar sözcükler: Mikroöğretim tekniği; yansıtıcı öğretim; hizmet-öncesi öğretmen eğitimi.

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