

Lesson Study: Does It Work for Personal Development of Pre-service ELT Teachers?¹

Estudio de clase: ¿Funciona para el desarrollo personal de los profesores de ELT en formación?

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Abstract

This study is intended to document Lesson Study experience of six preservice English language teachers studying at a state university in Turkey and investigates its impact on their personal development as prospective language teachers. The large volume of data collected through unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, learning journals, classroom observation records and a focus group interview during a seven-month period was subjected to thematic and categorical analysis using qualitative analysis software. The results revealed that Lesson Study intervention contributed to the personal development of the participating pre-service teachers significantly in a variety of aspects, especially in making critical teaching judgements and ensuring adaptable teaching in the classroom. The results further indicated that Lesson Study also led to the development in creative teaching, establishment of rapport with students, self-awareness, and self-confidence of the participants.

Keywords: Lesson study, personal development, teacher judgment, self-awareness, self-confidence

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo documentar la experiencia de estudio de clase de seis futuros profesores de inglés que estudian en una universidad estatal en Turquía e investiga su impacto en su desarrollo personal como futuros profesores de idiomas. El gran volumen de datos recopilados a través de entrevistas no estructuradas, entrevistas semiestructuradas, diarios de aprendizaje, registros de observación en el aula y una entrevista de grupo focal durante un período de siete meses se sometió a un análisis temático y categórico utilizando un software de análisis cualitativo. Los resultados revelaron que la intervención del Estudio de Lecciones contribuyó significativamente al desarrollo personal de los futuros docentes participantes en una variedad de aspectos, especialmente a la hora de emitir juicios de enseñanza críticos y garantizar una enseñanza adaptable en el aula. Los resultados indicaron además que el estudio de lecciones también condujo al desarrollo de la enseñanza creativa, al establecimiento de una buena relación con los estudiantes, a la autoconciencia y a la confianza en sí mismos de los participantes.

Palabras clave: Estudio de clase, desarrollo personal, juicio del profesor, autoconciencia, confianza en uno mismo.

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo documentar a experiência do Estudo de Lição de seis professores em formação de língua inglesa estudando em uma universidade estadual na Turquia e investigar seu impacto em seu desenvolvimento pessoal como futuros professores de línguas. O grande volume de dados coletados por meio de entrevistas não estruturadas, entrevistas semiestruturadas, diários de aprendizagem, registros de observação em sala de aula e uma entrevista em grupo durante um período de sete meses foi submetido a análise temática e categorial usando software de análise qualitativa. Os resultados revelaram que a intervenção do Estudo de Lição contribuiu significativamente para o desenvolvimento pessoal dos professores em formação participantes em vários aspectos, especialmente na formulação de julgamentos críticos de ensino e garantindo um ensino adaptável na sala de aula. Os resultados também indicaram que o Estudo de Lição também levou ao desenvolvimento no ensino criativo, estabelecimento de rapport com os alunos, autoconsciência e autoconfiança dos participantes.

Palavras-chave: Estudo de Lição, desenvolvimento pessoal, julgamento do professor, autoconsciência, autoconfiança.

The dynamic and complex nature of teaching and the question of what teachers need to know and what kind of capabilities they need to develop for effective teaching have placed important challenges for teacher education. In an ongoing debate on whether the emphasis in teacher education programs should be on cognitive or social and personal aspects of human development, the process of developing necessary knowledge base and skills seems to be recognized and worked on more than the others. In fact, in the literature, the personal element in teaching is used inextricably with professional development acknowledging the complementary association between the two. However, an exclusive focus on personal dispositions for being a good teacher is largely absent. There is a need for a heightened awareness of personal dimension in teacher development, i.e., personal growth in terms of self-esteem, creativity, and empathy.

This study argues that Lesson study, originally designed as a collaborative model of professional development, provides prospective teachers with the opportunity to develop personal strengths and characteristics which would raise their consciousness about teaching practice. The findings of the study are expected to lead a wider discussion on the role of personal growth in teacher education.

Literature Review

Personal Development of Teachers

Douglas (2019) pointed out that in most teacher education programs around the world the focus is on the technical aspect of teaching while the reference to the personal growth is neglected or omitted which has been considered as the major reason behind teacher attrition among beginning teachers as this lack of opportunity for personal growth is thought to decrease motivation and commitment towards profession. Today we still see a wide array of research investigating professional development of teachers, while the research leaning on personal development exclusively is limited in number although being a teacher means a personal being and a professional becoming as suggested by Malm (2009).

Of the limited number of studies, Mikulec (2018) examined the personal development of 34 pre-service teachers majoring at Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level, Secondary and Special Education who participated in a study abroad program in England which included theoretical and practical trainings. The results of the longitudinal study revealed that the participants demonstrated significant personal growth regarding increase in self-confidence and tolerance for ambiguity, self-awareness, flexibility and adaptability and interpersonal skills. Medwell and Wray (2014) in their study aimed to analyze the effect of collaborative classroom research on the reflection and enquiry skills of eight pre-service teachers and observe its impact

on the professional and personal development. Medwell and Wray (2014), based on the findings, reported that the participants emphasized different aspects of personal development including growth of feelings of self-efficacy particularly in making decisions, gaining new insights into working with others and a better understanding of many issues concerning outcomes for learners.

Tang & Choi (2004) examined the cross-cultural experiences of four student teachers who participated in a one- year post graduate diploma in primary education in different parts of the world and presented their self-reported experiences. They reported that the participants experienced significant personal gains in terms of greater will power, heightened efficacy, increased confidence and stronger sense of self working in collaboration with other people.

It is clear that personal development is more related with the affective aspect of professional development that is largely overlooked by initial teacher training programs. In this respect, personal development of teachers has been underestimated in teacher education programs and largely ignored among scholars, therefore further attention has to be paid to the personal process involved in becoming a professional teacher (Malm, 2009).

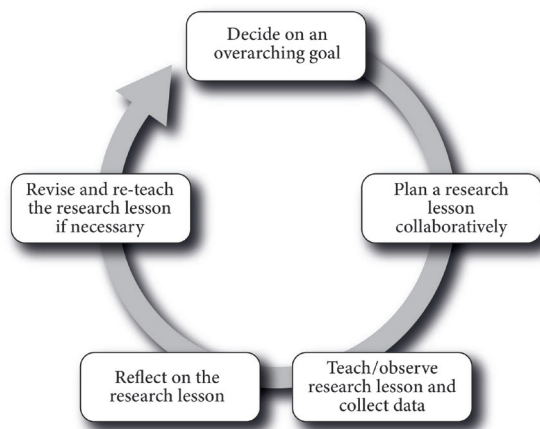
Within this perspective, the present study intends to explore if Lesson Study intervention makes a difference in the personal development of participating preservice ELT teachers and discusses the possibility of implementing Lesson Study in initial teacher training programs.

Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a collaborative professional development model originated in Japan. It has recently attracted attention all over the world and has begun to be practiced as an intervention tool for the development of both pre-service and in-service teachers for the purpose of stimulating changes in teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. LS consists of a number of phases of planning, conducting, observing and reflecting on a specifically designed research lesson (Lewis, Perry, & Hurd 2009; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016).

In LS, live research lessons focus on students' learning outcomes that are designed collaboratively by a group of teachers. A group member conducts the research lesson while the other group members document their observations, that are informed by student learning. The group comes together in a debriefing session immediately after the conducted research lesson for the purpose of discussing its impact on students' learning. The cycle is repeated until the overarching goal that shapes the structure of the research lessons is established. The following diagram displays a typical LS cycle.

Diagram 1. Lesson Study Cycle



Source: Adapted from conceptual overview of Lesson Study by Murata, 2011, p.2)

Thanks to this collaborative nature, field-based origin, student learning basis and research-oriented focus, LS reflects the features of contemporary professional development models. It is an inquiry-oriented approach to teaching (Warwick et al. 2016) and learning (Lewis & Perry, 2017). It has been used and adapted widely in almost all subject areas. (Robinson & Fernandez, 2006; Lewis, Perry, & Hurd 2009; Cerbin, 2011; Norwich & Ylonen 2015; Cajkler & Wood, 2016).

Robinson and Fernandez (2006), for example, integrated LS into an initial teacher training program through micro teaching practices and investigated the impact on 74 prospective teachers for fifteen weeks. The results of the study revealed that LS is a powerful tool in terms of bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher training programs as well as promoting collaboration among teacher candidates and critical reflection.

Murata and Pothen (2011) also investigated the impact of LS on pre-service elementary mathematics courses students during a ten-week research process and reported significant positive results, similar to the previous research, suggesting that LS supported connection making and sense making process between theory and practice, participants gained variety of pedagogical skills focusing their attention on student learning and LS established ground for meaningful collaboration. More recently, Leavy and Hourigan (2016) incorporated LS into pre-service teacher education following a strict formal approach and observed year 3 and year 4 students at a university for a 10-week semester period. They reported that LS intervention contributed significantly to the participating prospective teachers' pedagogic content knowledge.

Of the limited studies on LS from personal development perspective, Chassels and Melville (2009), reported that participating in lesson study can reduce student teachers' sense of isolation as new teachers and introduce them to norms of working as part of a teacher community. Within this perspective, this study aims to explore the impact of the Japanese Lesson Study professional development model on Turkish pre-service English language teachers' personal development and the possibility of implementing LS into pre-service language teacher education in Turkey. Therefore, the following research question and sub research question guided the inquiry for the present study.

RQ 1. How does the Lesson Study professional development model affect participants' personal development?

RQ 1 a. How does each participant perceive the contribution of the Lesson Study process to their personal development?

Methodology

Research design

Since the study intended to investigate LS in its natural context and present detailed interpretation using a variety of data sources, qualitative research design was applied as the methodological foundation of the research. As a form of qualitative research, case study design was chosen because the subject of inquiry, LS, in the present study was observed in detail through multiple case research lesson applications in order to observe multiple interacting variables at work (Yin, 2014) in leading to personal development which was of research focus.

Research participants

Six pre-service ELT teachers, who were in their senior years, participated in the study. They were selected on a voluntary basis among the ones who were considered to be a representative sample of the target population. Their ages ranged from 22 to 27.

The researcher himself also had three distinctive roles. First, he provided the necessary training on the theory and implementation of LS which lasted for 5 weeks. Second, he assumed the role of a counselor by participating in lesson planning meetings and post lesson discussions and helping the preservice teachers when needed. It is important to note that the researcher did not intervene directly or indirectly to change the flow of process by floating ideas during lesson planning meetings and post lesson discussions. The third role of the researcher was related to his conventional researcher duties as organizing research lesson team, observing interaction during meetings, investigating research lessons, recording observations, and collecting relevant data.

The last participant in the research was an outside observer who played a significant role by providing different standpoints for the LS team and thus enhanced their experience significantly. He was present during the whole research process and contributed significantly with his reflections, opinions, and thoughts. What makes his role different from the researcher is that he acted as counselor for the participants to ensure different perspectives and was not responsible for coordinating activities and collecting evidence.

Lesson Study Process

Originally, the whole study process consisted of two stages: theoretical and practical. The former was planned to introduce LS intervention and inform the participants about the philosophy behind. The latter aimed to put the theoretical information provided by the training into action with ongoing cycles of research lessons which consisted of one pilot study and four following research lessons. The following diagram summarizes the steps taken during the whole research process.

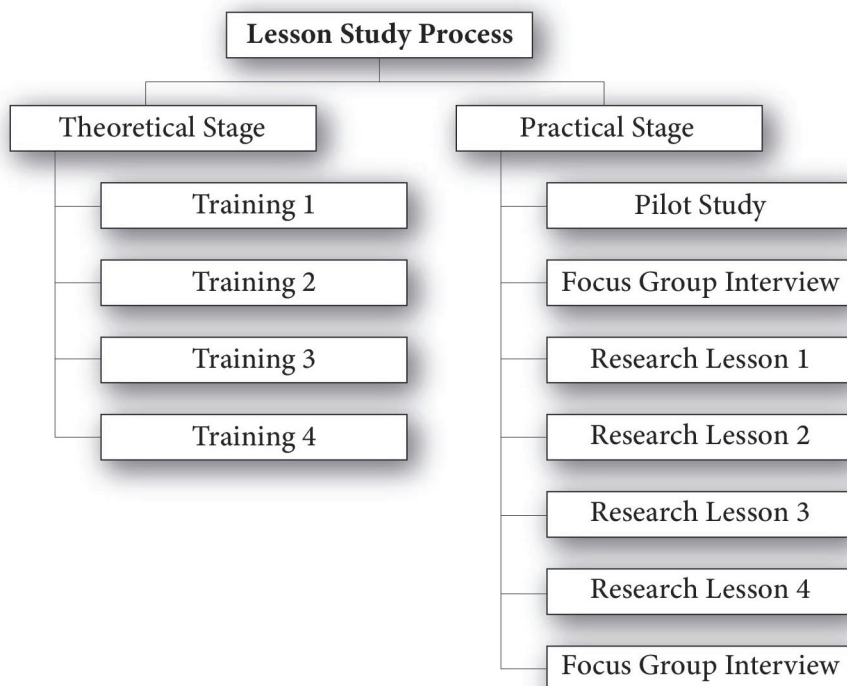


Diagram 2. Lesson Study Process

The study was planned to be implemented in one academic year. The theoretical stage lasted five weeks which included the training on finding a focus for the research lessons, designing, planning, analyzing and revising research lessons. When the theoretical phase was over, the participants decided on an overarching goal which was providing highest student participation to the activities and planned a research lesson for the pilot study that was consistent with it. The participants were provided with necessary documents prepared by Barbrina, Chokshi, and Fernandez (2012), which included group goal selection document, lesson study protocol and lesson plan template. After an intensive discussion over the target group, the LS team decided to apply the pilot study with 7thGrade students to test the applicability of the LS in Turkish educational context. The results were quite promising and led to a number of changes in the structure. The cycle continued for four more research lessons with a number of changes in research lesson plan content in each cycle until LS team decided in fourth research lesson that overarching goal was attained and core lesson objectives were obtained.

Data Collection

As the present study aimed to investigate Lesson Study that is a comprehensive phenomenon, large volume of data was collected from variety of sources through multiple cases. These sources are semi-structured interviews that included transcriptions of lesson planning meetings and post lesson discussions of each research lesson, classroom observations recorded by the participants, reflective journals written by each preservice teacher after each research lesson cycle and focus group interviews conducted after pilot study and end of the research. In this respect, the collected data was triangulated from multiple data sources for the purpose of broader understanding of research phenomenon.

Data Analysis

As the study provided large scale of qualitative data collected through variety of data collection tools, Atlas.Ti Qualitative Data Analysis Software was used for the inductive thematic analysis within grounded theory framework as it enables structuring large volume of data, analyzing it systematically and representing the results with diagrams and relations with other data types. The raw data was analyzed deeply and coded through open coding procedure in the descriptive stage. Later on, the coded data was organized themes and categories through constant comparative method until reaching a theoretical model (Glaser, Strauss, 1967).

The internal validity was enabled by presenting each step of LS in detail and ensured by the systematic analysis of the collected data with the use of qualitative data software.

Also, the collected data was triangulated for the comprehensive understanding of the research query. For the purpose of increasing content validity, expert opinion was collected for each data collection instrument. The constructs and questions forwarded to the participants in semi-structured interviews, reflective journals and focus group interviews were analyzed by a subject specialist in terms of wording and content and necessary modifications were made on the constructs on the basis of the feedback provided.

For the reliability intercoder agreement was employed. The coding of the researcher and another subject specialist were compared using SPSS 23 with Cohen's Kappa Statistics. The data sets consisted of one pilot study, four research lessons and post application reflections were subjected to Cohen's Kappa separately and interpreted on the basis of the strength of agreement. A substantial degree of consensus was attained between the raters' coding on the basis of Landis and Koch's (1977) reference list. In order to increase reliability, the data sets and relevant codes were reviewed again, and it was seen that most disagreements originated from the differences in the interpretation of two code labels that were named as "teacher adaptability" and "teacher judgement". Therefore, relevant quotations were reanalyzed and by the raters until consensus was established by making necessary changes. The code book for personal development theme was shaped as in the following table after intercoder reliability analysis.

Table 1. Reorganization of the Codebook for the "Personal Development" Theme

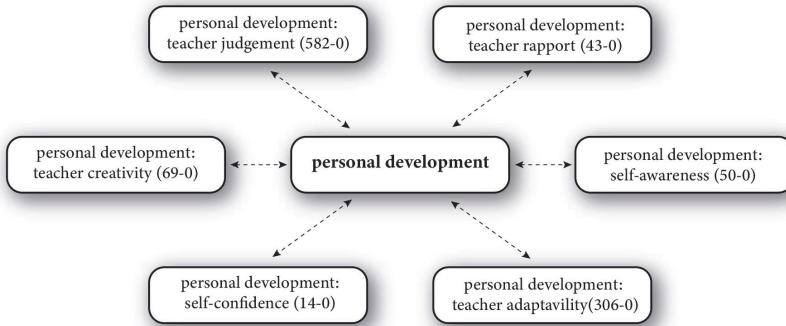
Theme	Codes
Personal Development	self-awareness
	self-confidence
	teacher adaptability
	teacher creativity
	teacher judgement
	teacher rapport

Results

The Impact of Lesson Study on the Personal Development of Pre-service Teachers

The following network view displays the graphical representation of codes subsumed by personal development theme together with groundedness representing code frequency and density which refers to number of links to other codes.

Figure 1. Network view of personal development theme



The figure represents that personal development is consisted of six codes as mentioned before and each code label has different groundedness level which shows the application frequency of each code. On the basis of the groundedness, it is crystally clear that the most grounded code in the present study is “teacher judgement” as it occurred in 582 occasions. The second most grounded code label is “teacher adaptability” since it was associated with 306 quotations. The groundedness of the following codes declines significantly as presented in the figure given above. On the basis of the groundendness level, “teacher creativity” ranked third as it was referenced in 69 instances. “Self-awareness” code was applied in 50 occasions and ranked fourth. The following code is “teacher rapport” and it was linked to 43 data segments. The least grounded code is “self-confidence” because of the limited number of associations with the data that is 14. The figure further presents the density of each code is 0 which implies that the codes did not co-occur with each other in any quotations.

Table 2. The Impact on the Personal Development

	Codes	judgement	adaptability	creativity	self-awareness	rapport	self-confidence	TOTAL
Pilot	N	136	44	42	9	15	1	247
	%	23,3	14,3	60,8	18	34,8	7,1	23,2
RL1	N	129	107	18	8	10	4	276
	%	22,1	34,9	26	16	23,2	28,5	25,9
RL2	N	110	85	4	0	3	0	202
	%	18,9	27,7	5,7	0	6,9	0	18,9
RL3	N	157	60	4	0	4	1	226
	%	26,9	19,6	5,7	0	9,3	7,1	21,2
RL4	N	47	7	0	2	4	3	63
	%	8	2,2	0	4	9,3	21,4	5,9
Post	N	3	3	1	31	7	5	50
	%	0,5	0,9	1,4	62	16,2	35,7	4,6
	N	582	306	69	50	43	14	1064
	%	54,6	28,7	6,4	4,6	4	1,3	100

The table given above clearly illustrates that “teacher judgement” is the most frequently associated code label with the quotations within all data sets when compared with the others. More than half of the relevant data segments (54,6 %) were linked to “teacher judgement” code and the number of selected quotations is 582 as represented by the table. When the table is analyzed on the basis of the data sources, it is not possible to talk about consistent distribution. In other words, the frequency does not increase or decrease steadily.

The second code on the basis of groundedness is “teacher adaptability” as represented by the table. A total of 306 data segments were linked to the relevant code and the number corresponds to 28,7 % of the total code quotation association within personal development theme. As in the previous code label, a consistent frequency distribution does not exist among data sources. The highest number of associations between “teacher adaptability” code and the relevant data segments were observed in research lesson 1. A total of 107 quotations were associated with the given code which is equal to 38,7 % of the total associations with “teacher adaptability” code.

The frequency of the following codes declines sharply as given in the table. The code that is ranked third on the basis of frequency count is “teacher creativity”. The number of associations with the given code is 69 which corresponds of 6,4 % of the total code quotations associations that is 1064. The table clearly displays that the code was most frequently linked to the data segments in the pilot study with 42 occurrences. As in

the previous codes, a consistent distribution was not observed across data sources as the table presented.

The frequency table further presented that the codes that are ranked fourth and fifth in terms of groundedness are “self-awareness” and “teacher rapport” respectively. A total of 50 quotations were linked to “self-awareness” code which is equal to 4,6 % of the total number of code-quotation association within personal development theme. Similarly, 43 data segments were associated with “teacher rapport” code label which corresponds to 4 % of the total. In a similar vein, a consistent distribution across data sources was not observed for both code labels.

The code with the lowest groundedness within personal development theme is “self-confidence” as given in Table 2. Only 14 occurrences existed for the given code which is equal to 1,4 % of the total code-quotation association. With respect to frequency distribution across data sources the table displays that the code was most frequently referenced in post application documents.

Briefly, it could be stated that the code that has the highest groundedness is “teacher judgement” since more than half of the associations within personal development theme is referenced with the given code. On the other end, the code label “self-confidence” stands with the lowest frequency count. It was also observed that a consistent distribution was not observed across data sources for each code label.

The Impact of Lesson Study on Each Participant’s Personal Development

The following code co-occurrence table representing the cross tabulation of codes which includes percentage and coefficient value of each association displays the frequency distribution of each code label and the strength of the relation for each participating preservice ELT teachers.

Table 3. Participants' Personal Development

Codes		judgement	adaptability	self-awareness	creativity	rapport	self-confidence	TOTAL
P1	N	72	37	8	4	3	2	126
	%	57	29	6	3	2	2	100
	C	,08	,06	,02	,01	,01	,01	
P2	N	143	100	11	31	14	2	301
	%	48	33	4	10	5	1	100
	C	,13	,11	,02	,11	,02	0	
P3	N	60	16	8	3	5	1	93
	%	65	17	9	3	5	1,4	100
	C	,08	,03	,03	,01	,02	0	
P4	N	88	39	6	4	3	4	144
	%	61	27	4	3	3	3	100
	C	,09	,06	,01	,01	,01	,01	
P5	N	116	55	7	15	4	3	200
	%	58	28	4	8	2	2	100
	C	,11	,07	,01	,02	,01	,01	
P6	N	102	54	10	12	13	2	193
	%	53	28	5	6	7	1	100
	C	,11	,07	,02	,02	,03	0	

The table clearly visualizes that a consistent distribution exists for each partner with respect to the strongest impact as “teacher judgement” is the code label that is most relevant to all six participants' data segments referenced with personal development. Nearly half of each participant's quotations that were referenced with the codes within personal development theme were associated with “teacher judgement” code and the co-efficient values given in the table above also indicate that the association is the strongest when compared with others. The following quotation chosen randomly from the participants' data segments as sample for the association between “teacher judgement” code and relevant data.

It is vitally important to give instructions properly. Even the teacher should act out the instruction while giving it and check whether the students have understood or not. (The participant is commenting on the reason behind why the planned activity was not implemented properly in pilot study RL) (Ext.2: 54).

The following code that's ranked second in terms of impact for all six participants is “teacher adaptability” but the frequency declines at a significant level as given in Table

3. The table presents nearly one third of each participant's quotations were associated with "teacher adaptability" code label except participant 3. The following quotation is the representative for the association between "teacher adaptability" code and related data segment.

The activity should be a pair work activity because the classroom size is too big. In that way, we can also avoid chaos and the noise (The participant is reporting that the follow up activity should be adapted to pair work format on the basis of his/her observations in class observation sheet during RL four) (Ext.3: 31).

Concerning the other codes, a significant impact on the participating preservice teachers was not observed as displayed by Table 3. For the first participant, the codes were ordered as "self-awareness", "teacher creativity", "teacher rapport" and "self-confidence" respectively on the basis of frequency count but the number of occurrences for each code label is quite rare.

With respect to second participant findings, it was observed that "teacher creativity" code is ranked third in terms of impact on the basis of frequency distribution of the codes. Although the impact is not as strong as "teacher judgement" and "teacher adaptability" labels, a considerable number of quotations were associated with "teacher creativity" code as presented in Table 3. The number of quotations referenced with the code is 31 which corresponds to % 10 of the total number. The association of "teacher creativity" and the relevant data is exemplified in the following quote.

We will divide the classroom into groups. We will arrange a carton box for each group. We will cover each box and they are going to be planets. We will distribute papers for each group to make paper airplanes. They will make up sentences using should and shouldn't and throw the planes into the card box. Those who have the most paper planes in the box will save the World and win the game. (The participant is suggesting a creative game for the follow up activity) (Ext 12: 48).

Participant 3's and 4's findings represented similar distribution to the previous partners. The strongest impact was observed in "teacher judgement" code as mentioned before and "teacher adaptability" is ranked second depending on quotation numbers, their percentages to the total and coefficient values provided by the table. The following codes are not significant in terms of impact and were not discussed because of space concerns.

"Teacher creativity" was re-observed at a low level in Participant 5's findings and ranked third in the order of impact as presented by Table 3. A total of 15 quotations was referenced with the code which is equal to % 8 of the total number of quotations associated with the codes within personal development theme. The following extract taken from Participant 5's data sources is representing the association between "teacher creativity" code and relevant data segment.

I am thinking about something like Sherlock Holmes. He was pulling something with a rope. I don't know why but it came to my mind. I am thinking of connecting it to an activity,

but I don't know if we can use it in the introduction or presentation. (The participant is taking the floor in the pilot study lesson planning meeting and commenting on an activity to include into the lesson plan. (Ext. 19: 155).

The code was followed by “self-awareness”, “teacher rapport” and “self-confidence” codes respectively but the impact is not significant as given in the table.

Participant 6's findings presented different distribution in terms of impact as presented in Table 3. Although the impact is not strong, the code that is ranked third on the basis of frequency count is “teacher rapport”. The code was applied in 13 occasions according to code co-occurrence table whose percentage to the total is % 7. The following is a sample extract for the association between “teacher rapport” code and relevant data.

I saw that there were some foreign students in the classroom and other students were saying something negatively. It seems as if they don't like them. They didn't engage in the research lesson. Therefore, we have to solve this problem because it is clearly affecting their participation in the classroom. (Ext.4: 101).

The following code ranked fourth with respect to frequency distribution is “teacher creativity” as given in the table. The code appeared in 12 occasions and the percentage of the association is % 6,2 on the basis of total quotation number. The co-efficient value of the association is 0,02 which indicates a weak relationship between the code and the referenced quotations.

I would like to suggest something. We can bring one more box into the classroom and we write “recycling box” on it. When the game is over, the students may throw those papers that they use for the game into the recycling box. That would be consistent with our RL theme (The participant is offering a unique idea to apply into the RL for the following RL) (Ext.15: 42).

The next code that is fifth in the rank order is “self-awareness” and the impact is very low. The code was associated with 10 quotations as displayed by the table and the number corresponds to % 5,1 of the total which is 193. The co-efficient value which is 0,02 is the same as the previous code quotation association. The extract below exemplifies the relation between “self-awareness” code and a selected quotation from Participant 3.

This process has had a great impact on my perceptions about teaching and education and on my professional route in terms of how to plan and teach a course on the basis of students' needs and unexpected situations (Ext.70: 1).

The least grounded code concerning impact for the participants is “self-confidence” except Participant 4. The code was applied on a few occasions for all the participants as displayed in Table 3. In other words, the code has the lowest frequency level in terms of association with the quotations concerning personal development.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate if Lesson Study intervention had an impact on the personal development of participating preservice ELT teachers and the findings revealed Lesson Study is a vital professional development model leading to personal growth of prospective teachers which is consistent with the existing literature supporting strong positive impact of Lesson Study on the personal and professional development of both practicing and prospective teachers (Sims & Daniel, 2009; Dudley, 2016; Hart, Alston, & Murata, 2011; Lewis & Hurd, 2011; Lewis, 2009).

The study provides findings concerning personal development of pre-service teachers enabled by Lesson Study intervention. Within this perspective, the study revealed similar findings with Lewis (2009) who noted enhanced teacher learning leading to instructional improvement, knowledge about teaching, interpersonal relationships and personal growth that is triggered by Lesson Study model.

The observation of five research lessons during recycling processes of planning and implementation provided opportunities for the participating six preservice ELT teachers to make a variety of teaching decisions on the basis of their observations which contributed significantly to professional teaching judgement and teaching decision making skills. Smith (as cited in Bruniges, 2007, p. 244) stated that teacher judgement is not a random and ordinary teaching decision as it requires critical, reflective, and attentive process. Within this perspective, Lesson Study provided situated learning opportunities for the participants that employed a variety of pedagogical judgements which deepened their pedagogical repertoire of teaching and helped them make sound judgements about teaching.

The findings further revealed strong impact of Lesson Study process on the adaptability skills of the participating preservice ELT teachers which requires ability to respond efficiently to ever-changing and dynamic classroom conditions. As Corno (2008) and Collie & Martin (2016) suggested adaptability is a significant competency for effective teachers and professional development models should include activities encouraging teachers to employ their adaptability skills in the classroom. It was observed in the present study that Lesson Study provided an ideal ground for the participating preservice ELT teachers that they practiced their adaptability skills constantly because of the nature of Lesson Study process which entailed reshaping lesson plans recurrently and teaching constructively on the basis of observation of student learning during the application of research lessons. Significant changes were recorded in Lesson Study group members' adaptability skills as the process proceeded. The group members were able to respond flexibly and effortlessly to students' needs and changing circumstances in the classroom towards the end of the process. Therefore, it is possible to claim that Lesson Study is an effective tool for contributing to prospective teachers' adaptability skills (Schipper, van der Lans, de Vries, Goei, & van Veen, 2020).

In consistent with Dudley's (2015) statement "creativity is the sine qua non of Lesson Study" (p.19) the intervention fostered participating prospective teachers' creativity at a certain level but the perceived impact was low as presented by the findings. It was observed that ongoing cycles of research lessons consisted of lesson planning meetings and post lesson discussions triggered teacher creativity, as Lesson Study process drove participants to reflect on the obstacles in front of the implementation of the research lessons effectively and find alternatives to solve them for the upcoming one. The process revealed that the participants were able to generate creative and extraordinary ideas for the research lessons during lesson planning meetings and associate them with the classroom activities which led to instructional improvement as observed. In this sense, the study offers similar findings with Murooka's (2007) ideas who suggested that the experimental nature of Lesson Study contributes significantly to teacher creativity.

The results further represented that Lesson Study raised participants' awareness about their strengths and weaknesses, but the perceived impact was not significant as revealed by the findings. Especially, semi-structured interviews and reflective journals involved references to participants' existing ill-formed beliefs about learning and teaching derived from early experiences, biases towards some learner types and emotional ups and downs. Although the observed impact was low, it could be argued that Lesson Study also provides a ground for promoting awareness of self as teachers.

Lesson Study also provided reasons for the prospective teachers to create a positive classroom atmosphere in order to establish strong emotional relationship with the students which could be attributed to student learning-oriented nature of Lesson Study. Although the impact is not strong, some of the participants reported that Lesson Study intervention helped them to see the planned research lessons through the eyes of the students and feel empathy with them. As a result, they were better able to observe students' learning and engagement in the classroom and raised awareness about students' needs which aligns with the relevant literature (Norwich & Ylonen, 2015; Murata, 2011; Cajkler, Wood, Norton, & Pedder, 2014).

Lastly, despite the limited impact on the basis of very few references, it could be suggested that Lesson Study may foster preservice teachers' self-confidence. Some participants strongly emphasized that Lesson Study reduced their concerns about being a teacher and encouraged them to feel brave and confident before getting into the classroom. In this respect, the study presented consistent findings with the existing literature investigated the effect of Lesson Study on the participating teachers' self-confidence and found correlating association (Villalon, 2016; Corcoran, 2011).

Conclusion

The findings of this study have significant implications for preservice teachers and initial teacher education programs. First of all, Lesson Study offers variety of valuable on-site opportunity for the prospective teachers who are considered to have variety of problems such as classroom management skills (Wubbels, 2011), deficit based thinking (Scheiner, 2023), dependence on textbooks (Ruswick, 2015), etc. The present study revealed that Lesson Study has a significant potential to remedy these deficits.

Also, the participants benefited substantially from the advantages of working in a collaborative environment in which they plan the research lessons collegially and team-teach them. In this sense, Lesson Study provides a valuable professional learning community in which the prospective teachers benefit from the dialogue and discussions that expose their implicit beliefs about teaching, reflect on them, question and restructure them if necessary.

Additionally, Lesson Study relies on the idea of teacher learning through inquiry which serves a useful purpose for personal development of prospective teachers who experience serious emotional breakdowns, tensions and lack of confidence before beginning their professional journey (Okan, 2002). In this sense, Lesson Study has potential to address student teachers' main survival concerns with its focus on key teaching skills such as teaching judgement, adaptability, creativity and thus promoting self-awareness and self-confidence.

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