Content and Language Integrated Learning from the Perspectives of English Language Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to explore the perspectives of English language teachers about content and language integrated learning (CLIL) after their preparation of lesson plans and accompanying materials in line with the language-driven CLIL approach. The participants are five English language teachers who are enrolled in the MA program in the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) at a state university in Turkey. After receiving adequate theoretical background, they were given time to develop three language-driven CLIL lesson plans following the steps of a lesson template. When the participants completed each lesson plan based on the contents they chose, they received feedback from their peers and revised their lesson plans accordingly. At the end of the whole lesson planning procedure, their lesson plans were analyzed to uncover their CLIL lesson plan preferences in terms of content. Also, by means of semi-structured interviews, their perspectives about the lesson planning process and in what ways the process contributed to their improvement were revealed. It was found that the CLIL lesson planning process and its contribution to their improvement in certain areas were generally perceived positively. Thus, it can be suggested that English language teachers should be encouraged to develop CLIL lesson plans.

Keywords: English language teachers, content and language integrated learning, lesson planning.

İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Bakış Açılarından İçerik ve Dil Entegreli Öğrenme

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dil odaklı içerik ve dil entegreli öğrenme (İDEÖ) yaklaşımı doğrultusunda ders planları ve beraberindeki materyalleri hazırladıktan sonra İDEÖ hakkındaki bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Katılımcılar, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) bölümünde yüksek lisans programına kayıtlı beş İngilizce öğretmenidir. Yeterli teorik altyapıyı aldıktan sonra, katılımcılara bir ders şablonunun adımlarını takip ederek dil odaklı üç İDEÖ ders planı geliştirmeleri için zaman verilmiştir. Katılımcılar seçtikleri içeriklere göre her ders planını tamamladıklarında akranlarından geri bildirim almış ve ders planlarını bu doğrultuda revize etmişlerdir. Tüm ders planlama sürecinin sonunda, içerik açısından İDEÖ ders planı tercihlerini ortaya çıkarmak için ders planları analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla katılımcıların ders planlama sürecine bakış açıları ve sürecin gelişimlerine ne şekilde katkı sağladığı ortaya konulmuştur. İDEÖ ders planlama sürecinin ve sürecin belirli alanlarda gelişimlerine katkısının genel olarak olumlu algılandığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin İDEÖ ders planları geliştirmeye teşvik edilmesi önerilebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngilizce öğretmenleri, içerik ve dil entegreli öğrenme, ders planlama.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Introduced as a curricular innovation and an adaptable teaching approach (Brown, 2015; Eurydice, 2006), CLIL is known today as a general term used to refer to integrating content and foreign language learning (Banegas, 2013). It is often argued that language and content are inseparable and one cannot be learnt or taught without the other (Ball et al., 2015). Therefore, CLIL is now embraced by many educational authorities worldwide as a means of holistic learning (Banegas, 2020), and it is more frequently applied to improve language learners' linguistic competence and cognitive flexibility (Coyle et al., 2010; Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). In addition to its benefits arising from its dual focus nature, CLIL is also believed to provide a safe learning environment, maintain authenticity in the classroom, pave the way for scaffolding and active learning (Mehisto et al., 2008) as well as fostering learner autonomy, co-operative learning and critical thinking skills (Mehisto, 2012).

It is also emphasized in the relevant literature that CLIL provides numerous advantages for teachers when they actively participate in the CLIL materials development process. For example, it is indicated that the experience of designing CLIL materials in line with the local context as well as the cognitive and linguistic needs of the learners is not only more appealing to the learners but also more likely to result in new opportunities for teachers' professional development (Ball, 2018; Banegas, 2010, 2016; Banegas et al., 2020; Morton, 2013). Especially, on account of the materials constraints in the field of CLIL, teachers should develop their own materials by revealing their students' preferences about topics, activities, and sources of input to make learning more meaningful to them (Banegas, 2012). It is pointed out that CLIL teachers often have lower levels of confidence resulting from the lack of adequate level of language skills so as to adopt a CLIL approach, and thus need to increase their understanding of CLIL (Lorenzo et al., 2010); therefore, they should be encouraged to engage in the CLIL materials design process (Wolff, 2012).

Particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts such as Turkey, some private schools implement a CLIL approach, and teachers in such schools generally feel under pressure because they need theoretical knowledge and experience about the implementation of CLIL (Kassymova & Çiftçi, 2020). However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, although there have been many studies investigating the contribution of CLIL lesson planning and materials development process to English language teachers' professional development in a number of contexts (Banegas, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2020; Banegas et al., 2020; Coonan, 2007; Grandinetti et al., 2013; Kewara & Prabjandee, 2018; Moore & Lorenzo, 2015), no such studies dealing with CLIL in the EFL teacher education context of Turkey have been carried out so far. Therefore, this study aims to explore the perceptions of a group of in-service English language teachers in Turkey regarding the language-driven CLIL lesson planning process.

TYPES OF CLIL

While any combination of content and language can be regarded as some form of CLIL (Ball, 2009), Ikeda (2013) differentiates between two types of CLIL: content-driven (hard) and language-driven (soft) CLIL. He states that hard CLIL requires the presentation of academic subjects (e.g., science) in the English language by content teachers. This type of CLIL is known to prioritize the teaching and learning of the content, and the assessment procedures in hard CLIL are based on students' content knowledge instead of their linguistic knowledge (Met, 1999). On the other hand, Ikeda (2013) points out that soft CLIL is the type of CLIL presented by language teachers using content only as a vehicle emphasizing language learning. English programs in language-driven CLIL contexts cover specific contents in an organized manner (Snow, 2014), and the contents in such contexts have the potential to contribute to the language learning process (Banegas, 2020).

Banegas (2015) also acknowledges that in language-driven CLIL, teaching content-specific vocabulary is prioritized, and content is used as context for genuine language input and output; moreover, special attention should be paid to the authenticity and visual attractiveness of the materials. It is claimed that hard CLIL has been more commonly studied by researchers and applied in language programs, and soft CLIL enabling students to improve their foreign language skills by means of contents from various disciplines is likely to grow in the field of ELT, particularly in EFL contexts as its popularity goes beyond Europe (Ikeda, 2013).

4CS FRAMEWORK AND LANGUAGE TRIPTYCH

Whether a language-driven or a content-driven CLIL approach is implemented in an English language program, there are some basic principles that need to be taken into consideration while developing CLIL lesson plans and materials (Martín del Pozo, 2016). As McDonough et al. (2013) indicate, a concept and a framework are required to plan teaching and to design CLIL materials in line with the CLIL pedagogy. One of these frameworks was developed by Coyle et al. (2010) under the title of 4Cs including the following basic principles of CLIL all of which begin with the letter "C" to help teachers to integrate content and language into their classes: content, communication, cognition and culture. Coyle et al. (2010) also proposed the language triptych to scaffold learners' use of language by enabling the analysis of language. Thanks to the language triptych, language activities are organized in order that materials can expose learners to the following: language of learning, language for learning and language through learning (García Esteban, 2013).

The 4Cs framework (Coyle et al., 2010) starts with content which refers to the theme. In this component, the originators of the framework emphasize that effective language learning occurs while learning the language thematically through the content deriving from various fields, such as history and science. The second component of the framework is communication exceeding the traditional limits of grammar instruction; thus, it is maintained that students learn the language to be able to use it and benefit from it to learn new knowledge. In the 4Cs framework, the third component is cognition which is closely associated with the importance of challenging learners to construct new skills and knowledge by means of active engagement in cognitive processes without relying on an expert's transmission of knowledge. The final component of the 4Cs framework, on the other hand, is the culture aiming to increase learners' awareness of their own culture and the other cultures; moreover, thanks to the authentic culture-appropriate CLIL materials, learners can be provided with the basics of global understanding, intercultural awareness and a realization of similar and different aspects of cultures.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the language triptych developed by Coyle et al. (2010), the language of learning (e.g., the language of science) is an analysis of the language which learners are in need of in order to get access to essential skills and concepts about the content in the CLIL context. As exemplified by these researchers, a learner might need to use simple past tense in a science lesson, and he/she can be scaffolded through the creation of a learning environment where certain phrases are used meaningfully and suitably to the content of the lesson instead of the formal instruction of the past form of verbs. Secondly, the researchers argue that language for learning pertains to the language which students are supposed to learn to survive in a foreign language context. They also suggest that using the language effectively is difficult for students and for this; they need strategies and skills, such as pair work and group work as well as the knowledge of speech acts (e.g., describing, making conclusions). Finally, language through learning is based on the idea that learning occurs by means of both language and thinking, and unlike traditional language classrooms, learners in the context of CLIL are in need of learning the language to improve their cognitive processes mentioned in the language triptych while gaining language competencies at the same time (Coyle et al., 2010).

CLIL LESSONS AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The aforementioned 4Cs framework and the language triptych are known as tools aiming to enable English language teachers to incorporate content and language in their lessons plans and materials (Coyle et al., 2010). These frameworks are deemed to be essential because the lack of CLIL materials is frequently discussed in the CLIL literature; for example, it is stated that the limited number of ready-made CLIL course books and other CLIL materials is one of the handicaps for the successful implementation of a CLIL approach (Banegas, 2010, 2014). Appropriate context-sensitive materials (e.g., visual aids) dealing with the integration of content and language are generally missing (Catenaccio & Giglioni, 2016), and the unavailability of CLIL materials has always been a pressing issue throughout the CLIL context of Europe (Ball, 2018).

Approaching CLIL as a novel concept for language teachers, Sasajima (2019) maintains that CLIL materials development is crucial for the professional development of the teachers. In a similar vein, it is asserted that specifically the preparation of language-driven CLIL materials by the language teachers is likely to foster crucial characteristics, such as teacher motivation, identity and autonomy (Ball, 2018; Banegas, 2013). To illustrate, Banegas (2013) ascertained that the teacher-prepared language-driven CLIL materials development process in his study led to the professional development of the teachers through the following: collaboration among teachers, the

awareness that CLIL is a feasible approach to be adopted even in programs in which students have been subjected to traditional language instruction, the negotiation of syllabus and the enhancement of teacher-derived principles described by the researcher as the foundation of CLIL didactic transposition. His action research study concludes that there is a need for equal participation as well as autonomy in terms of planning CLIL lesson plans and materials.

In another study in the same vein, it was discovered that teachers who were given the freedom to design their own CLIL materials by resorting to Internet sites developed for pedagogical purposes felt more motivated to prepare materials as they were not restricted only to printed sources (Coonan, 2007). Teacher-prepared CLIL materials were also found to have the potential to create teacher awareness about issues such as prioritizing the focus on content over explicit instruction of linguistic rules (Banegas, 2015). In a more recent study, Banegas et al. (2020) uncovered that university EFL teachers who were engaged in a CLIL materials development procedure following a CLIL workshop improved their pedagogic, content and linguistic knowledge as well as their identity, agency and motivation as CLIL materials designers. Therefore, it is suggested by Banegas (2017) that in-service teacher education programs should incorporate a component dealing with the preparation of CLIL lesson plans and materials sticking to a framework such as the one devised by Coyle et al. (2010).

From the aforementioned literature dealing with different aspects of CLIL teacher education, it is realized that CLIL lesson planning and materials design offer numerous advantages for in-service English language teachers (Kewara & Prabjandee, 2018). Moreover, considering the lack of relevant studies in Turkey (Kassymova & Çiftçi, 2020), the current study based on the following research questions aims to investigate the CLIL lesson planning process of a group of EFL teachers by delving into their content preferences, perceptions of Coyle et al.'s (2010) 4Cs framework, feelings about receiving feedback about their lesson plans, perceived challenges and solutions in lesson planning as well as the contribution of the process to their professional development and teacher identity as CLIL lesson planners:

1. How did EFL teachers determine the content focus of their CLIL lesson plans?

2. What do EFL teachers think about the 4Cs framework used in the CLIL lesson plan preparation procedure?

3. How do EFL teachers feel about receiving peer feedback related to their CLIL lesson plans?

4. What are the challenges EFL teachers encountered in the CLIL lesson planning process and their ways of overcoming them?

5. To what extent can CLIL lesson planning contribute to EFL teachers' professional development?

6. To what extent can CLIL lesson planning contribute to EFL teachers' identity as CLIL lesson planners?

2 | METHOD

In this qualitative study, participants were engaged in a teacher research defined as a research design in which the teacher inquires into his/her own practices (Richardson, 2001). Within this research design, the study adopts a descriptive case study (Yin, 2003) focusing on the perspectives of a group of English language teachers about CLIL after they voluntarily took part in a CLIL lesson planning procedure following an introduction to different aspects of CLIL in an MA course.

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

Participants were five volunteer English language teachers enrolled in the MA program of an ELT department at a state university in Turkey. All of them had completed major ELT courses dealing with issues such as the curriculum and materials design. The teachers were female, and their English language teaching experience ranged from young learners to adults and from private schools/language courses to public schools. They also had teaching experience spanning 4-13 years; however, they did not receive any formal education on CLIL.

The MA program in the context of the study aims to provide English language teachers with knowledge related to areas such as conducting academic research and such skills as verbally presenting the findings of a research study. They are also required to write a thesis upon successful completion of MA courses. At the time of the current study, they were taking a fourteen-week MA course with special emphasis on theoretical and practical issues

regarding CLIL. Within the scope of this course, they were provided with the theoretical knowledge prior to this study regarding the definition and scope of CLIL, variations in the CLIL curriculum and the theory behind CLIL as well as with the practical aspects of CLIL (e.g., how to prepare CLIL lesson plans and materials) based on Coyle et al.'s (2010) book. Furthermore, an article by Banegas (2017) elaborating on the teacher-designed CLIL materials was discussed with the teachers.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Following the CLIL training, the participating EFL teachers worked toward their lesson plans. Each teacher developed three 80-minute language-driven CLIL lesson plans and accompanying materials. They were given nearly three weeks to prepare each of their lesson plans and materials considering the sample lesson template developed by Coyle et al. (2010) and used by Banegas (2015) in an earlier study. Moreover, feedback was shared among the participants at the end of each lesson planning phase resorting to a peer feedback form adapted from Arshad and Mahmood's (2019) checklist.

Although the participants were randomly paired, one of them volunteered to work with two peers throughout the feedback process as five teachers volunteered to take part in the study. They made necessary revisions in each lesson plan in line with their peer's suggestions (Farrell, 2011). For research purposes, the peer feedback received by the peers were submitted to the researcher together with the CLIL lesson plans and accompanying materials as well as the self-reflections they wrote about their peer's suggestions, their own thoughts about these suggestions, the revisions they made and their own opinions about their lesson plans.

DATA COLLECTION

This study involves two qualitative data collection instruments. Firstly, document analysis was used to identify the content preferences in the participants' lesson plans (n=15). Neither the lesson plans/materials nor the self-reflections were graded during the research procedure to allow the volunteer teachers to be creative and express themselves freely. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted online in English with each of the participating EFL teachers, and each individual interview lasted approximately 35 minutes. The interview questions prepared in accordance with the literature (Ball, 2018; Banegas, 2016; Banegas et al., 2020; Coyle et al., 2010; Izadinia, 2016; Kelchtermans, 1993) mainly focus on the following issues: how participants determined the content focus of their lesson plans, how they felt about Coyle et al.'s (2010) 4Cs framework and about receiving feedback from peers, what kind of difficulties they encountered and the relevant solutions they came up with throughout the lesson planning procedure, and finally how the lesson planning process contributed to their improvement in terms of professional development and teacher identity as CLIL lesson planners.

DATA ANALYSIS

While analyzing the lesson plans, the researcher read through the global goals of the lesson plans and the teaching objectives of 15 lesson plans to identify the content preferences of the participants. In addition, the analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted and recorded online was based on the relevant representative participant quotations presented in the findings section in italics (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In cases where more than one participant made a similar comment in response to an interview question, one of the representative comments was presented in the analysis, and while relevant interview quotations fewer than 40 words were given within parentheses in the paragraphs, those including more than 40 words were presented as block quotations (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). To keep the data anonymous, the documents and interview quotations of the teachers (T) were coded as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 throughout the analysis.

3 | FINDINGS

The first research question deals with how the participants determined the content focus of their CLIL lesson plans. In order to ascertain their justifications of content preferences, it is important to firstly present the contents they chose for their lesson plans. As can be realized in Table 1, the chosen contents of 15 lesson plans come from various content areas (e.g., British philosophers, climate and daily life).

Table 1: Content Focus of the Lesson Plans

Content Focus	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Lesson 1	British philosophers	Shape and motions of the Earth	Five senses	Jobs in oil and gas industry	Food around the world
Lesson 2	Black holes	Impacts of World War I on humanity	Ecosystems	Describing rooms	Climate and daily life
Lesson 3	Literature	Post-impressionism and van Gogh	Literary devices and story elements	Identifying personality through signatures	Animal world

In response to the interview question as to how they decided upon their contents, being familiar with the content was considered by two teachers as the main reason (e.g., T2: "*I thought that it would be fun to create a lesson plan around van Gogh because I know a lot about van Gogh and post-impressionism.*"). On the other hand, two teachers stated that they took the culture component into consideration while determining their contents (e.g., T5: "*I tried to write a lesson plan about food. You know that food is cultural, and we can find very different kinds of food around the world.*"). Additionally, one of the teachers made the following comment arguing that she wanted to challenge herself with her content choices to improve her self-esteem in terms of content knowledge:

T1: *My first lesson plan was about major schools of thought in philosophy. The second one was about physics, more specifically about black holes and the last one was about literature. And why did I choose them? Because I wanted to challenge myself as an English language teacher. I wanted to increase my self-esteem in terms of content.*

PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE 4CS FRAMEWORK

The second research question focuses on teachers' perspectives about Coyle et al.'s (2010) 4Cs framework used in the CLIL lesson plan preparation procedure. This framework and the relevant sample lesson template were followed as a guide to prepare the lesson plans and accompanying materials in this study, and the perspectives about the framework were found to be positive in general. Some of the positive key words that were associated with the framework by the teachers are as follows: concise and organized (n=2) (e.g., T2: "*I found it very concise and very organized in achieving the aims because I believe that everything was stated clearly in that.*") as well as detailed as can be realized from the following comment:

T5: *The 4Cs framework is really detailed. You can also see your aims and goals in a detailed way. It helped me a lot. For example, while I was preparing a lesson plan, I may not have realized some specific goals. But when I tried to write them down, I realized what my aims were.*

Other positive words related to the 4Cs framework are as follows: useful (T4: "*The template helps a lot. It is useful.*") and specific (T1: "*It is very specific when it comes to objectives delineation.*"). Still, one of the teachers pointed out that students' background knowledge was not emphasized in the lesson template, and thus made the following suggestion:

T1: *In the lesson plan, we do not have students' background knowledge or what they already know. So, such specifications should be inserted into this CLIL lesson plan because I really felt like I am not giving enough information about the target group while using this lesson plan template.*

PERSPECTIVES ABOUT RECEIVING PEER FEEDBACK

The third research question delves into the perspectives of the teachers pertaining to receiving peer feedback about their CLIL lesson plans. The 4Cs framework was applied in this study in a way that all the teachers shared feedback related to their lesson plans. In reaction to receiving feedback, all the teachers appreciated its value by expressing the benefits of peer feedback in the process of CLIL lesson plan development, such as realizing the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson plan thanks to an outsider perspective (n=3) (e.g., T2: "*We need an outsider perspective to correct our mistakes or improve ourselves. For this process, I found this very beneficial because it helped me see my weaknesses and my strengths, which is motivating.*") and paving the way for reflective thinking

(n=2) (e.g., T1: "*It is very helpful for a teacher to reflect on his/her practices while getting feedback and after revising the lesson plan and then to write a reflection form. I think this is a wonderful and brilliant idea.*").

In relation to the feedback procedure, teachers were also asked to comment on their peers by producing metaphors to describe them. As can be observed from such metaphors as "*encouraging friend*" (T1), "*mentor*" (T2), "*magnifying glass*" (T3), "*a safeguard*" (T4) and "*mirror*" (T5), the peers were perceived positively as well.

CHALLENGES IN CLIL LESSON PLANNING

As for the fourth research question examining the challenges teachers encountered in the CLIL lesson planning process and their ways of dealing with these problems, they mentioned the following difficulties: integrating the cultural aspect into the lesson plan (T2: "*The first lesson plan was shape and motions of the Earth. It was very challenging for me to consider adding cultural aspects of the content.*"), finding relevant materials (T5: "*To find some materials can be sometimes difficult because of the topics I chose.*"), the extensive amount of time required to prepare CLIL materials (T1: "*One cannot simply develop CLIL materials out of the blue. It takes too much time.*"), choosing appropriate reading texts (T3: "*Choosing the suitable reading text was very difficult because I needed to go over the content in the text by myself and then created activities.*") and searching a long time for topic selection (T4: "*The primary challenge was choosing the topic for the lessons. I was hesitant if this topic was appropriate for CLIL or not. I had to search a lot for topic selection.*").

Furthermore, as a means of overcoming the aforementioned challenges, the following ways were mentioned by the teachers: resorting to the Internet (n=2) (e.g., T2: "*While looking at some ideas on the Internet in terms of what I can teach related to the shape and motions of the Earth, I saw some examples in which seasons were taught within this content in some materials.*"), readily available materials (T1: "*In my first lesson plan, I heavily depended on the readily-made materials because I didn't know what to do.*"), sample lesson plans (T3: "*I tried to look up sample lesson plans.*") and peer and self-reflections as can be understood from the following comment:

> T5: *My peers' reflections helped me a lot. I tried to focus more on the challenges I encountered. I also checked with my inner thoughts. I mean I asked myself some questions, such as where I could use it, where I could put this material in my lesson plan and in what ways it would be useful.*

EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Related to the fifth research question exploring the extent to which CLIL lesson planning can contribute to EFL teachers' professional development, the participating teachers were firstly asked to comment on their perceived improvement from the first to the last CLIL lesson plans. It can be realized from the participants' statements that the teachers themselves and their peers evaluated their improvement in their last lesson plans positively in terms of two major issues: the visual attractiveness of the content (n=3) (e.g., T2: "*The visual attractiveness of the content I created has improved a lot since the first lesson plan*") and incorporating more intercultural elements as well as pair/group work activities (n=2) as can be seen in the following comment:

> T3: *The first lesson plan was kind of a draft for me. Based on my peer's comment, I increased the number of pair work and group work activities. Also, my integration of intercultural elements was very limited in the first lesson plan. But when it comes to the third lesson plan, I tried to include more intercultural elements and more pair work and group work activities.*

Secondly, their perceptions of CLIL improved as a result of their engagement in the CLIL lesson planning process. The majority of teachers (n=4) indicated that although they had held some negative attitudes towards the application of CLIL into the Turkish EFL context before they took part in this study, they were convinced that it is applicable into English language classes in Turkey. One of the representative comments is as follows:

> T1: *I used to believe that CLIL has some sort of elitism which means that only the ones in private schools for example, are able to reach CLIL courses or CLIL teachers. However, after I attended this lesson planning project, my fixed and implicit mindsets about CLIL and my prejudices about CLIL turned into something which is one hundred percent positive. This process made me aware of the fact that CLIL can be facilitated for many groups of learners.*

Conversely, as can be understood from the following statement, one of the teachers expressed negative perceptions of CLIL by pointing out that during the CLIL lesson planning stage, she became aware of the difficulty of writing a CLIL lesson plan because of the expertise it necessitates, and she thought that it is hard to incorporate CLIL into her classes due to the linguistic difficulty of CLIL lessons:

> T3: *At first, I was very positive about CLIL, but over time when writing the lesson plans, I realized that it is difficult to write the lesson plan as it requires expertise, and it is difficult to apply a CLIL lesson plan in my context. The language needed for a CLIL lesson is higher than a simple EFL lesson.*

Another improvement area that was under investigation was the linguistic improvement of the teachers. The participants believed that their involvement in the study somehow contributed to the following language skills: contextualized and terminological vocabulary knowledge (n=3) (e.g., T3: "*Vocabulary development was very significant for me because I may not know the subject-specific knowledge based on topics like ecosystem. When designing the lesson, I went through some terms.*") and writing (n=2) (e.g., T2: "*I can say that it contributed in a micro way to my organizational writing skills, how to organize a text and content.*").

On the other hand, as far as their content knowledge improvement is concerned, there was unanimous agreement among the teachers that they gained knowledge about various content areas on which they designed their lesson plans. They exemplified the improvement of their content knowledge by mentioning the following content areas: the effects of World War I on humanity (T2: "*Especially my second CLIL lesson plan in which I prepared a content regarding the impacts of World War I on humanity helped me learn about some different aspects of the war.*"), vertebrates/invertebrates (T5: "*I didn't know what vertebrates and invertebrates meant, but later when I focused on animals in my lesson plan, I learnt what they were.*"), the subcategories of ecosystem (T3: "*Before designing my second lesson plan, I knew what ecosystem was, but I didn't know the subcategories of ecosystem.*"), the sector of oil and industry (T4: "*I had never known about the sector of oil and industry.*") and deus ex machina/iambic pentameter (T1: "*I didn't know anything about deus ex machina which is a literary device, and I have never heard iambic pentameter before. While I was creating my lesson plan about literature, I searched and learned a lot about them.*").

Finally, the improvement in their CLIL material development skills was agreed upon by the teachers at the end of the study. They commented on the following skills: designing an organized lesson plan (n=2) (e.g., T2: "*To be honest, I haven't done anything like this before, so I didn't have any chance to create such an organized lesson plan. I can say that the biggest contribution has been to my materials development.*"), including more discussion activities and visuals (n=2) (e.g., T3: "*When creating CLIL lesson plans, I tried to do more discussion activities. I also used more visuals in my CLIL lesson plans.*") and incorporating technology (T4: "*I learned how to give a shape to my materials and gained better use of technology in this process.*"). A further comment was made by one of the participants to underline that her dependence on readily available materials decreased from the first to the third CLIL lesson plan:

> T1: *Especially in my first CLIL lesson plan, I heavily depended on a material that I found on the Internet. In my second CLIL lesson plan, my heavy reliance and dependence on readily made CLIL materials decreased. I was the one who prepared most of the activities. For the last one, I actually didn't need any readily made CLIL lesson plans or textbooks. I looked for authentic materials and designed almost all of the activities.*

EFL TEACHERS' IDENTITY

The last research question aiming to ascertain the extent to which CLIL lesson planning can contribute to EFL teachers' identity as CLIL lesson planners was approached below considering the following three components of teacher identity (Kelchtermans, 1993): self-image (i.e., how oneself is described), self-efficacy (i.e., how weaknesses and strengths are evaluated) and task perception (i.e., how the main responsibilities are perceived).

The teachers were firstly asked how much they had known about CLIL before participating in this study, and all of them indicated that they had no formal education on CLIL (e.g., T4: "*I didn't know anything before taking the course.*"). Therefore, they were asked to reflect on their self-image formed as a result of their participation in the study, and they evaluated themselves as CLIL lesson planners. Most of the participants (n=4) described themselves as somewhere in the middle (e.g., T3: "*I may not say I became an expert in that subject, but I improved*

myself a lot. I am in the middle, not inexperienced and not an expert."). Whereas only one participant claimed that she is in a "very good position" as the comment below illustrates:

> T1: *I see myself in a very good position. I have seen myself in the eyes of other people thanks to the peer feedback. They said that I am able to create a very excellent lesson plan referring to my third lesson plan. I gained teacher self-confidence and self-esteem.*

With respect to self-efficacy, it was found that all the participants reported some strengths and weaknesses regarding the lesson planning procedure. The strengths they mentioned were using visuals (T2: "*My strength was to use some visuals very effectively*."), preparing detailed lesson plans (T5: "*As far as I understand from my peer's comments, I am good at preparing detailed lesson plans. I try to focus on different points*."), being able to challenge herself by including abstract contents in the lesson plans (T1: "*My first asset is that I wanted to challenge myself with abstract contents like philosophy and physics*."), producing activities (T3: "*Actually, I didn't have any difficulties in coming up with the activities*."), and being able to design coherent lesson plans from simple to difficult and linking activities to the lesson template used in the lesson planning process (T4: "*My strength is the coherence of the stages of my lesson plan from simple to difficult. I also linked the stages correctly to the lesson template*.").

In contrast, the weaknesses expressed by the participants were as follows: the excessive length of time spent to prepare CLIL lesson plans (T2: "*My weakness is that I had huge amount of time preparing my lesson plans because I wanted them to look perfect*."), not being able to determine the level of the texts (T5: "*When I see a text, I cannot easily decide which level it is*."), being too ambitious in content choice (T1: "*From time to time, I may get too ambitious about the topic itself. For example, black hole might not be a good idea for a lesson plan. From now on, I will keep it a little bit safe*."), writing lesson aims and objectives (T3: "*The most challenging part for me is to write the lesson objectives and the aims*.") and feeling indecisive in topic selection and materials development (T4: "*My weakness was being indecisive and hesitant while choosing the topics and also developing the materials*.").

The last component of teacher identity focused in the study is task perception. In reply to the question intended to uncover the main responsibilities of CLIL lesson planners towards students, participants touched upon the following responsibilities: creating materials which scaffold learners (T2: "*One of the responsibilities is to create materials in a way that they will scaffold students in their learning process. Everything has to be clear and understandable*."), enabling students to learn effectively (T5: "*Firstly, we need to help them learn effectively. Our aim isn't to make lesson really difficult for them. Our goal is to motivate them, not to demotivate them*."), raising students' intercultural awareness (T1: "*I perceive myself as a cultural ambassador as a CLIL teacher. When you take a look at my global goals, you will see that I want to increase the intercultural awareness of the students*."), taking the student profile into account (T3: "*We should take the student profile into consideration in our lesson plans. If we don't consider our students' cognitive and linguistic levels in our CLIL lesson plans, our lesson plans will be meaningless*.") and providing students with the correct amount of information (T4: "*My responsibility is to load the students with the correct amount of information*.").

4 | DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Considering the lack of CLIL materials designed in accordance with frameworks such as the 4Cs and the benefits of developing lessons/materials for English language teachers' professional development (Ball, 2018; Banegas, 2016; Banegas et al., 2020; Morton, 2013), this study investigated the perceptions of five EFL teachers in Turkey about the language-driven CLIL lesson planning process during which each of them developed three different CLIL lesson plans and accompanying materials.

The analysis of the lesson plans yielded the result that contents including geographical issues such as the shape and motions of the Earth, biological topics such as ecosystem and historical topics such as the World War I were selected by the participants when they were given the flexibility to choose their lesson contents. Also, the analysis of the interview data demonstrated that being familiar with the content was one of the main reasons behind the selection of these lesson contents. Leung (2015) similarly points out that English language teachers have the tendency to select their contents in their CLIL lesson plans depending on their familiarity with the contents.

The current study also uncovered that all the participants expressed their satisfaction with the 4Cs framework and the lesson plan template used in the study. Likewise, Turner (2021) favors the benefits of the 4Cs framework as it is compatible with student-centered and enquiry-based approaches. Moreover, the participating EFL teachers agreed on the advantages of the peer feedback process, and from the metaphors they generated to describe their peers, it was realized that their perceptions of their peers were also positive. This finding concurs with the idea that it is essential for CLIL teachers and materials designers to work cooperatively and support each other by sharing experiences, materials and practices (Banegas, 2016; Coyle et al., 2010; DelliCarpini, 2021).

Among the challenges participants encountered through the CLIL lesson preparation process are incorporating culture into the lesson plan, finding relevant materials and spending a lengthy amount of time. In the same vein, it is reported that the CLIL lesson planning and thus materials development process can be challenging and time-consuming at times (Banegas, 2016; Gierlinger 2007; Moore & Lorenzo, 2007). Carrying out extensive research about the content, choosing appropriate authentic reading texts, searching a long time for topic selection (Pérez & Malagón, 2017) and the lack of CLIL materials are also discussed in the literature as some of the most common challenges of the CLIL lesson preparation process (Ball, 2018; Banegas, 2010, 2013; Catenaccio & Giglioni, 2016). On the other hand, participants' ways of coping with these challenges (e.g., searching the Internet, peer-feedback, using readily available materials) demonstrate that as a result of their engagement in the CLIL lesson planning process, they developed "resilience" which is a term used to refer to the ability or capacity to resist and cope with challenges (Sammons et al., 2007).

Another focus of the study was the perceived improvement of the participants in areas, such as their perception of CLIL, lesson planning, content knowledge and materials development skills. Their perceptions of CLIL were generally found to be positive at the end of the lesson planning procedure. For instance, while one of the participants had considered CLIL as an elitist approach before the study, she favored the implementation of CLIL in the Turkish EFL content at the end of the study. The limited number of CLIL teachers, materials and training opportunities might sometimes evoke CLIL programs to be perceived as elitist, and teachers may become resistant to apply a CLIL approach (Hillyard, 2011; Mehisto et al., 2008); however, positive perceptions about CLIL in different contexts are evidenced in the relevant literature (Dafouz et al., 2007; Infante et al., 2009; Soler et al., 2017).

As far as the improvement in terms of materials design is concerned, participants responded positively as well. Teacher-made CLIL material preparation process is known to have the potential to give teachers awareness about issues such as prioritizing the focus on content rather than the explicit instruction of language rules (Banegas, 2015). On the other hand, pertaining to the content knowledge, all the participants indicated that they learned about contents from a wide range of disciplines ranging from literature (e.g., iambic pentameter) to history (e.g., World War I). This finding overlaps with that of Banegas et al. (2020) who unveiled that the content and linguistic knowledge of the English language teachers improved through their involvement in the CLIL materials design process.

Finally, it was observed that although the participants had no formal education on CLIL before taking part in this study, their identity was positively influenced by the CLIL lesson planning procedure applied herein. Despite the unfamiliarity with CLIL and the vagueness of the concept in teachers' minds (Savic, 2010), it is promising that most of the participating teachers described their self-images as CLIL lesson planners as somewhere in the middle in the end. The contribution of CLIL lesson planning to the professional development and the identity of the English language teachers was similarly highlighted by other studies as well (Banegas, 2020; Banegas et al., 2020).

Considering the positive influence of the CLIL lesson planning process on the improvement of English language teachers in a wide range of areas, it is suggested that CLIL is a valuable asset for in-service teacher education programs (Banegas, 2010, 2016; Banegas et al., 2020). Therefore, it would be fair to recommend that CLIL lesson planning could be an integral part of English teacher education programs, and more specifically, English language teachers should be given the theoretical background of CLIL as in the current study and then encouraged to prepare lesson plans and accompanying materials in line with a framework and a template (e.g., Coyle et al., 2010) in in-service teacher education programs or MA programs in the field of ELT (Banegas, 2017). The integration of content-based teaching into MA TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs is thought to be necessary taking the popularity of such programs in various TESOL contexts into

account (DelliCarpini, 2021; Turner, 2021). As also implemented in the present study, a peer feedback consortium can be established among the EFL teachers to share feedback about CLIL lesson plans and materials because peer feedback is considered useful in the process of teachers' professional development (Farrell, 2011).

As teacher perceptions in this study are based on language-driven CLIL lesson plans and materials that were not unfortunately implemented in the classroom due to time constraints, further studies can delve into both students and teachers' perceptions of CLIL following the implementation of the CLIL lesson plans and materials in the classroom setting. If an opportunity to observe students being exposed to a CLIL approach is provided to the English language teachers, more detailed perceptions could be elicited from them. For future studies, it can also be suggested that the influence of CLIL lesson planning process on pre-service EFL teachers should be investigated.

STATEMENTS OF PUBLICATION ETHICS

Ethics committee approval for the study was received from Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University Human Research Ethics Committee in Social Sciences.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author of the present article declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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