

## Research Article

**Cite this article:** Kabylova, M., Abishev, N., Orynbayeva, U., Zhumabayeva, M., & Shagataeva, Z. (2025). Enhancing Interactive Skills of Pre-Service EFL Teachers: Is Video-Case-Based Reflective Training Instrumental?. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 14, e2025100.  
<https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.15.100>

**Received** January 14, 2025

**Accepted** March 9, 2025

**Published Online** March 21, 2025

**Keywords:** Pre-service teacher practicum, teacher-classroom interaction, teacher self-efficacy, video-based coaching, video interaction guidance

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## Enhancing Interactive Skills of Pre-Service EFL Teachers: Is Video-Case-Based Reflective Training Instrumental?

Madina Kabylova , Nurlan Abishev , Ulserik Orynbayeva , Maral Zhumabayeva , Zaure Shagataeva

### Abstract

**Background/purpose.** This study addresses a critical lacuna in language teacher education by implementing and evaluating a video-enhanced coaching program designed to strengthen interactive skills and self-efficacy among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers.

**Materials/methods.** Conducted over two academic years, the research involved 46 final-year EFL pedagogy undergraduates who belonged to a treatment group (n = 23) and a historical control group (n = 23). Both groups undertook a 12-week teaching practicum with a year-long gap, but the intervention group received an additional five-week individualized training focused on interactive skills, delivered through video analysis sessions midway through the practicum. Filmed classroom interactions were completed at the first and final weeks of the intervention.

**Results.** Findings revealed that while both groups exhibited improvements in interactive skills over time, the intervention group demonstrated a substantially greater increase compared to the reference group. However, changes in self-efficacy beliefs were minimal and did not differ significantly between groups.

**Conclusion.** The results suggest that video-case-based training can promote the interactive skills of prospective EFL teachers, underlining the value of integrating reflective video analysis into teacher education programs. The lack of substantial impact on self-efficacy indicates that additional strategies may be necessary to bolster this aspect of teacher development. This paper contributes to the discourse on effective teacher training methodologies and highlights the potential of video-assisted reflective practices in cultivating foundational teaching competencies.

## 1. Introduction

Imagine a classroom, not just as a space for rote learning, but as a dynamic launchpad where young minds are prepared to navigate a world without linguistic boundaries. The teachers who guide these journeys are no longer simply instructors of grammar and vocabulary. They are cultural ambassadors, communication strategists, and architects of global understanding. However, the bar for these educators is rising rapidly. They must not only possess a deep well of pedagogical expertise but also embody the very linguistic proficiency they are tasked with imparting. The challenge of nurturing such multi-faceted professionals is now more pressing than ever.

English proficiency remains crucial in today's globalized world, underpinning professional opportunities and international relations (Bergström et al., 2025). This necessitates high-quality English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, especially in non-English-dominant countries (Tu, 2025; Zheldibayeva, 2025). Amid escalating expectations for teachers – ranging from pedagogical prowess to ethical standards – preparing educators who command in both English and effective teaching methodologies becomes imperative (Barahona et al., 2024).

The contemporary understanding of language acquisition emphasizes the critical role of interactive, communicative approaches in teaching and learning (Maijala et al., 2025). This perspective is supported by recent research (Baboza et al., 2023) applying Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to EFL contexts, which has demonstrated the power of coordinated teacher-classroom interactions – manifested through nuances like eye contact, gestures, and intercorporeality – in promoting Spanish-speaking sixth graders' engagement and English learning outcomes. In this context, what emerges as a sine qua non for tomorrow's foreign language instructors is the attainment of interactive skills, to some extent overlapping with the concept of classroom interactional competence, which can be generically explained as the use of specific interactors (i.e., language resources that facilitate interaction) like referential questions and teacher echo in order to boost language teaching and learning (Atar & Rafi, 2024).

Language teachers must foster a dialogic and safe environment to create a vibrant and student-centric classroom, encouraging active participation and risk-taking. Moorhouse et al. (2023) propose that teachers can achieve this by reviewing and learning from their classroom interactions, and one promising avenue for this is video analysis. Sablic et al. (2021) scrutinized tens of relevant papers and concluded that video-supported reflection has gained steam in teacher professional development. One possible reason behind this surge is this approach enables prospective educators to observe their own practice, thereby heightening their awareness of necessary changes and intrinsic motivation for progress.

## 2. Relevance and Research Questions

Despite the recognized value of interactive skills in teaching, scholarly focus, particularly within the domain of EFL education, remains scant and disproportionately favors early childhood settings (Aras, 2024). Moreover, the potential of dialogic reflections on video recordings of student-teachers' practice to enhance the quality of classroom interactions, especially during their practicum, is not well-documented and is primarily supported by qualitative data (Karakas & Yükselir, 2021; Mutluoglu & Balaman, 2023; Yuan et al., 2022). Furthermore, while self-efficacy is a critical component of teacher effectiveness, its development through video-enhanced coaching has been negligibly explored. Against this backdrop, the present research aims to fill the existing scholarly void by implementing and evaluating a video-case-based training program supposed to bolster the interactive skills and confidence of EFL pre-service teachers, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on effective language teacher education. The following research questions guided the intervention:

RQ1. To what extent does video-case-based training impact EFL pre-service teachers' interactive skills compared to non-participants?

RQ2. To what extent does video-case-based training influence EFL pre-service teachers' self-efficacy compared to non-participants?

### **3. Literature Review**

#### ***3.1. Video-enhanced Reflection and Interactive Skills***

The feedback-informed training proposed in the current paper is rationalized from the vantage point of Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, whose assertions can be construed as lending support to the need for collaboration among learners and instructors in the learning process since students can collaborate to make progress as they observe each other's lesson excerpts supplemented by feedback from the instructor (Odo, 2022). In the realm of literature, reflective practice is a cornerstone for teacher development, involving critical self-examination to advance classroom performance (Burhan-Horasanli & Hart, 2024). Two major forms of reflection are distinguished: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. While the latter pertains to spontaneous adjustments during teaching (Dellaportas et al., 2023), it requires pedagogical experience, rendering it hardly adequate for novices (Kleinheksel et al., 2023). Conversely, reflection-on-action is a deliberate post-teaching evaluation, enabling teachers to develop adaptive strategies for future lessons (Hartmann et al., 2023). Hence, reflection-on-action can be prompted by activities that trigger reflective processes, e.g., lesson footage analysis (Ekin et al., 2024).

Integrated findings from video-recorded classroom interactions and post-observation feedback sessions advocate that harnessing visual sources for reflection can bring about positive shifts in novices' instructional interactions (Brocca, 2024; Sert et al., 2025). However, a search for empirical studies on this topic elicits that most existing studies recruiting pre-service teachers either utilize videos of other teachers' lessons (Yildiz et al., 2023) or staged scenarios (Thiel et al., 2023) rather than self-recordings, which may not fully reflect the real-world challenges faced by pre-service teachers. Furthermore, a recent systematic review (Weng et al., 2023) failed to find relevantly documented effects of video-enhanced interventions among prospective educators except those pertaining to content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and psychological characteristics.

#### ***3.2. Video-enhanced Reflection and Teacher Self-Efficacy***

In a study (Schlosser & Paetsch, 2023) where student-teachers analyzed video lessons and then completed observation tasks, reflection was a significant antecedent of changes in self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is a term covering a teacher's belief in their capability to perform the tasks required of their role (Täschner et al., 2025). The current study was interested in self-efficacy beliefs related specifically to the domain of classroom management capabilities. By analyzing their own teaching videos within the intervention reported herein, pre-service teachers can potentially cultivate their self-efficacy via phenomena corresponding to the four well-documented beneficial mechanisms (Mok et al., 2023), i.e., they can experience success (mastery experiences), observe peer achievements (vicarious experiences), receive affirming feedback (social persuasion), and learn to manage their emotional responses (physiological cues). By incorporating video-enhanced reflection, this research intended to tap into these sources, ultimately improving the self-efficacy of EFL pre-service teachers.

### **4. Methodology**

#### ***4.1. Participants***

This research involved 46 student-teachers (Mage = 20.8 years, 95.7% female) enrolled in the fourth year of an EFL teacher education program at the corresponding author's university. The study

spanned across two academic years: 2022/2023 (n = 23 historical control group) and 2023/2024 (n = 23 intervention group) during both years' spring semesters, as participants engaged in a culminating 12-week teaching practicum in elementary classes. The university's ethics committee approved the study, and each student-teacher provided informed consent after being briefed on the research objective and assured of confidentiality. Study coordinators also distributed digital consent forms to parents of children in the relevant classes, seeking permission for their children to be included in video recordings used to assess the student-teachers' interactive skills.

## **4.2. Outcome Measures**

### **4.2.1. Interactive Skills**

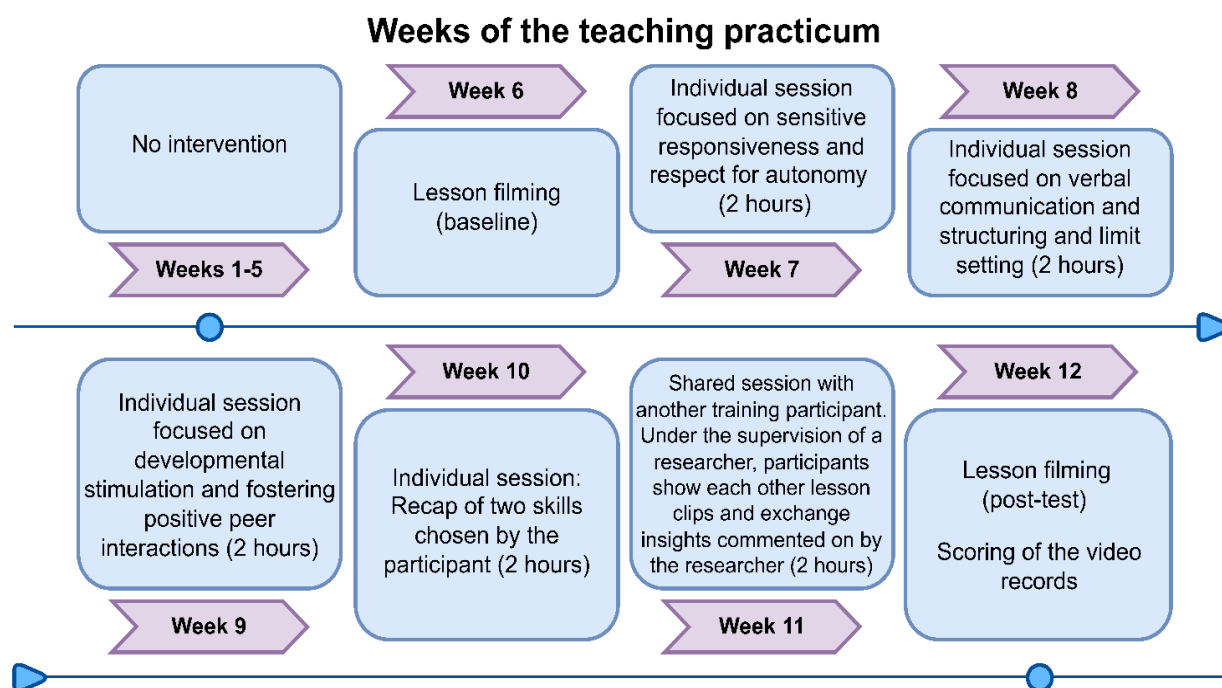
In the absence of ready-to-use instruments to gauge pre-service teachers' interactive skills, the footages were scored by two observers (inter-rater reliability as Kohen's kappa above .80 pre- and post-test) using the checklist from the Caregiver Interaction Profile (CIP; Helmerhorst et al., 2014) tailored for primary EFL classroom contexts and renamed to the Teacher Interactive Skills Assessment (TISA). The TISA focuses on the interactive skills of educators across six dimensions (listed in Appendix I). The observers were given a description that began with an explanation of the corresponding interactive skill. Further, a concise coding scheme was provided, which guided the rating of each skill on a seven-point scale: very low (1), low (2), low to moderate (3), moderate (4), moderate to high (5), high (6), and very high (7). The overall score (TISA total) was then determined by averaging the ratings across all six skills. The observers were external EFL teachers blind to the allocation of the participants. They were trained to recognize and differentiate the specific behaviors outlined in each dimension. The applicability of the TISA scoring rubric was verified through a pilot micro-study. Spearman-Brown first-last reliability of the instrument was .72 at the baseline and .77 post-training.

### **4.2.2. Teacher Self-efficacy**

Prospective teachers' perceptions concerning their efficacy in managing the classroom were captured via a single-factor scale claimed to be appropriate for preservice teachers (Fives & Buehl, 2009). The questionnaire comprises 12 items, such as "To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?" Surveyees evaluate their level of agreement by selecting an option from a 9-point Likert scale that spans from 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal). A higher selected point corresponds to a stronger sense of self-efficacy. The scale items were translated to Russian, back-translated, and pre-administered among undergraduates to ensure face validity. The first-last estimate reliability of the Russian-language questionnaire was .80 at the prior administration and .74 post-intervention.

## **4.3. Procedures**

Baseline measurements of the six interactive skills in both groups were completed by research assistants blind to assignment status using lesson video recordings taken in the sixth week of the practicum. During the same week, assistants administered a paper-and-pencil survey to all 23 participants, collecting their self-reported teacher self-efficacy and basic demographic data. In the seventh week, student-teachers in the treatment group started their five-week interaction training individually, which unfolded in parallel to the teaching practicum. Starting the intervention midway through the practicum enabled analysts to isolate the intervention effect from the practicum effect. The intervention sequence was adapted from Reijman et al. (2024) and is outlined in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Intervention scheme

Each training session followed a consistent format tailored to the specific skills being addressed that week. Initially, participants reviewed a detailed skill description provided in a manual developed by the research team. Once they had a theoretical understanding of the skills, they viewed pre-prepared video examples demonstrating the skill at high, medium, and low proficiency levels. Following this, a Zoom session was conducted where the participant and a research team member analyzed these videos, discussing the reasons behind the varying proficiency levels observed. Next, participants watched curated video clips of their own interactions with students. They were encouraged to reflect on these interactions in the context of the skill being learned. The researcher facilitated this reflection by asking targeted questions to help participants recognize effective elements of their teaching and consider enhancements or alternative approaches where necessary. Finally, participants identified specific behaviors to concentrate on in the upcoming week. These points were noted for further discussion in the subsequent session, ensuring continuous improvement and focused development.

In the 12th week of the practicum, research assistants again filmed participants' interactions with schoolchildren, and the teacher self-efficacy scale was administered for the second time, providing a post-test evaluation. Participants in the historical comparison group were also re-surveyed (excluding demographic questions) and filmed during weeks 6 and 12. However, these assessments took place a year earlier, and the comparison group did not receive any interaction training between these time points.

#### **4.4. Data Analysis**

The data are reported as means  $\pm$  standard deviations (SDs). The normality of data distribution and equality of variances were assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and Levene's test, respectively. To compare post-intervention values between groups, while accounting for pre-existing values, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed via 'ancova' function in R. Effect sizes were calculated using omega-squared ( $\omega^2$ ), categorized as very small ( $\omega^2 < .01$ ), small ( $.01 < \omega^2 < .06$ ), medium ( $.06 < \omega^2 < .14$ ), and large ( $\omega^2 > .14$ ) (Field, 2014). Paired t-tests were subsequently conducted to compare pre- and post-experimental results within each group. An effect was flagged as statistically discernable, provided that the p-value was lower than .05.

## 5. Results

Table 1 summarizes mean and SD in both groups at both time points for interactive skills and self-efficacy. The Levene's test (interactive skills:  $F(1,44) = 1.436$ ,  $p = .237$ ; self-efficacy:  $F(1,44) = .033$ ,  $p = .856$ ) and the Shapiro-Wilk test (interactive skills:  $W = .897$ ,  $p = .889$ ; self-efficacy:  $W = .971$ ,  $p = .314$ ) proved equality of variance and a Gaussian distribution of the data underlying both response variables.

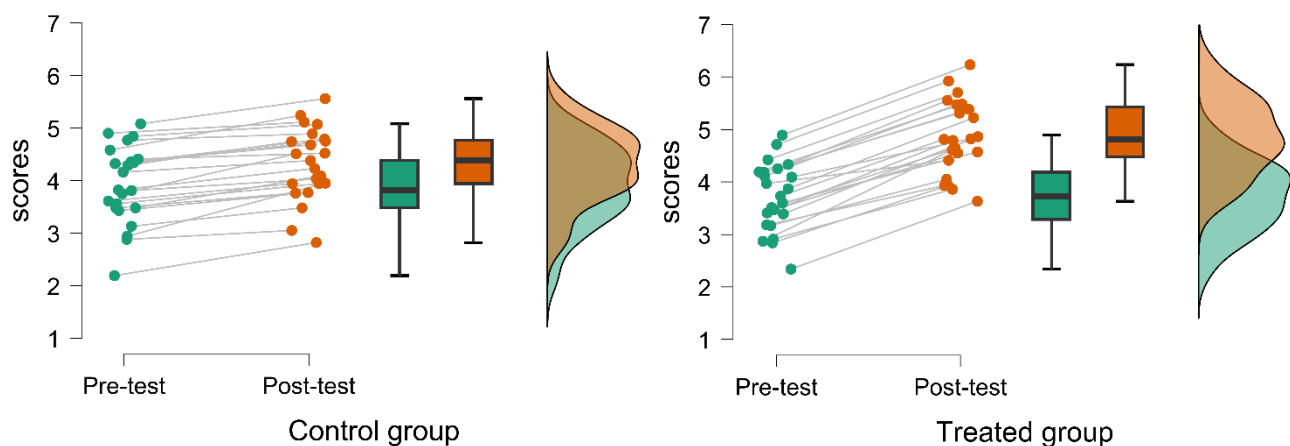
**Table 1.** Scores on outcomes between the control and treated groups (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation)

variable\ group	Control		Intervention		P-value**
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	
Interactive skills	3.92 $\pm$ .73	4.32 $\pm$ .69	3.71 $\pm$ .84	4.86 $\pm$ .94	<.001
P-value*	<.001		<.001		
Teacher self-efficacy	5.56 $\pm$ .65	5.70 $\pm$ .71	5.90 $\pm$ 1.25	6.16 $\pm$ 1.09	.304
P-value*	.351		.122		

Note: \* derived from paired t-test, \*\* derived from analysis of covariance

### 5.1. RQ1. "To what extent does video-case-based training impact EFL pre-service teachers' interactive skills compared to non-participants?"

In terms of intragroup changes in interactive skills, non-participating student-teachers improved their classroom performance significantly over the five weeks (10.2% increment;  $t(22) = -8.721$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as those who attended the video analysis sessions (30.8% increment;  $t(22) = -19.793$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). However, the treated individuals had 12.5% greater post-test scores than the non-treated trainees, and ANCOVA revealed this was a statistically detectable between-group difference with a large effect size ( $F(1,43) = 97.033$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\omega^2 = .217$ ). Individual means, box plots, and density distribution of the results in each group are plotted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Interactive skills assessment results

### 5.2. RQ2. "To what extent does video-case-based training influence EFL pre-service teachers' self-efficacy compared to non-participants?"

Per teacher self-efficacy, the control and experimental groups showed insignificant growth of 2.6% ( $t(22) = -.953$ ;  $p = .351$ ) and 4.4% ( $t(22) = -1.609$ ;  $p = .122$ ), respectively, as compared to the time 1 measurement. The training participants perceived their possibilities in teaching 8.0% higher relative to business-as-usual subjects at the post-intervention. This contrast was non-significant ( $F(1,43) = 1.081$ ;  $p = .304$ ;  $\omega^2 = .001$ ). The data is detailed on Figure 3.



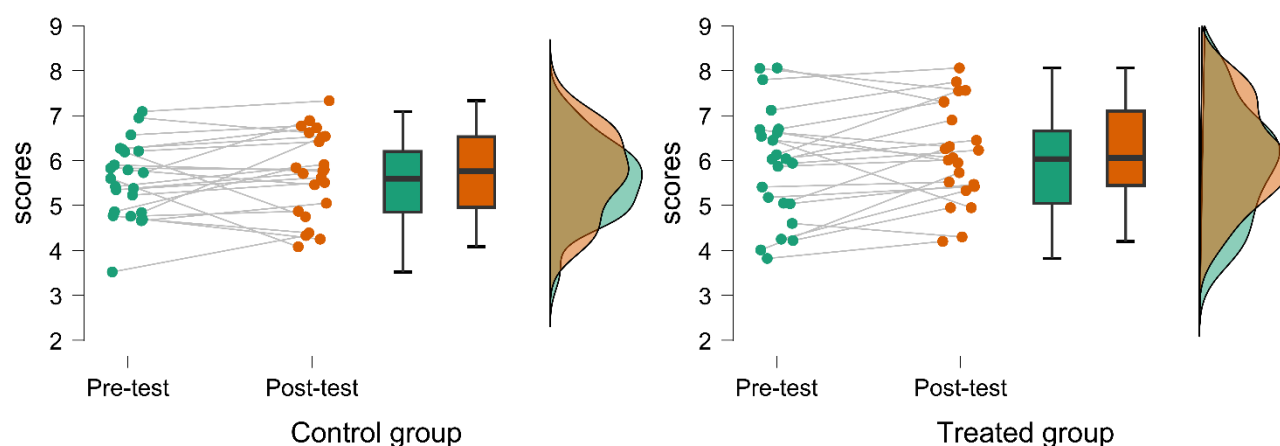


Figure 3. Teacher Self-efficacy Survey results

## 6. Discussion

This work sought to ascertain the impact of the video-driven intervention on interactive skills and self-efficacy of EFL pre-service educators. The analysis has elucidated that while both groups showed betterment in interaction quality over time, the video group demonstrated significantly greater score gain when compared with their no-treatment counterparts. However, the impact on self-efficacy perceptions was less noticeable, with no marked difference between the groups.

These findings somewhat resonate with past research in the field. In particular, Hu et al. (2023) found improvements in teacher-child interaction skills among prospective teachers who received video-based coaching. Jilink et al. (2018) reported that video interaction guidance accelerated early education teachers' instructional support performance. Our study extends this evidence to the context of EFL pre-service teachers, highlighting the promise of post-video-watching programs in augmenting interactive skills across various educational contexts. In relation to self-efficacy, our findings diverge from those of Hußner et al. (2023), who reported a significant increment in self-efficacy among student-teachers who engaged in systematic reflection on their teaching through video analysis.

The mechanisms behind the observed beneficial influence on interactive skills can be attributed to the reflective nature of the experimental setting. The approach deployed in the here described intervention can be considered a sort of video interaction guidance, a reflective technique typically implemented in staff training and family relationships therapy (Rogers et al., 2023). This methodology likely facilitated internalizing effective teaching behaviors and correcting less effective ones (Horak et al., 2023). By repeatedly observing and analyzing their own teaching practices alongside exemplar clips, participants may have developed a more nuanced understanding of effective interactive behaviors.

As for the lack of significant growth in student-teachers' perceptions of their teaching capabilities, the intensive focus on skill development might have overshadowed the reflective processes directly linked to self-efficacy enhancement. On the other hand, it is possible that the reflective process, while beneficial for skill development, led participants to become more aware of their limitations, thus tempering their confidence. Additionally, the self-efficacy measure harnessed in this study may not have been sensitive enough to capture the subtle changes that may have occurred as a result of the training.

This study contributes to the existing literature by quantifying the impact of online video coaching on pre-service teachers, an area that remains rarely investigated. From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore the value of judiciously embedding video feedback sessions in teacher education programs to address critical classroom interaction issues, particularly in preparing

educators for the interactive demands of language instruction. By utilizing a tailored version of the CIP and ensuring high inter-rater reliability, this research offers a robust methodology for assessing interactive skills in teachers.

### 6.1. Limitations and Suggestions

Despite its pluses, this research is subject to some methodological limitations. The global trend of female-dominated teaching profession (McDowell, 2023) is the case for the authors' country of affiliation as well. It is not really surprising hence that the sample is overrepresented by females. The generalizability of the data could be put to test by approximately replicating this exploration in countries such as Denmark and Spain where the odds of encountering male school teachers are higher. Obviously, the educational context differs from one country to another, so a single institution as a source of data also hampers the generalizability of the findings presented here. Moreover, the use of a historical comparator group, rather than a concurrent randomized control, may introduce potential confounding factors. Future research could address these two downsides by carrying out larger-scale experimentations across multiple institutions and using randomized controlled designs to conduce the applicability of the results to other educational situations. Lastly, one intriguing direction of inquiry is to conduct studies in accordance with Sablic et al.'s (2021) proposal, where videos are watched and analyzed both individually and in groups, which might potentially further amplify the benefits of the skill-focused approach.

### 6.2. Conclusion and Recommendations

This intervention is among the few academic efforts to buoy up the interactional quality of student-teachers' instruction within a video-based coaching approach. Moreover, this paper is the first to propose a structured, objective rubric to quantify pre-service teachers' interactive skills. By showcasing the effectiveness of retrospective classroom interactions reviewing, this study provides a hopeful outlook for the future of teacher education. The study's findings contribute to the growing body of literature on reflective practices in teacher education, particularly in the context of video interaction guidance. The researchers deem these findings as cause for optimism regarding the potential of video-assisted practice to elevate the quality of pre-service teacher training, ultimately contributing to more effective and engaging language instruction in EFL classrooms. Based on the findings of this study, practitioners in the field of EFL teacher education could consider incorporating video-case-based training as a regular component of their pre-service programs. Additionally, providing supplementary support and resources to boost teacher self-efficacy, such as positive feedback loops, could yield more comprehensive improvements in prospective teachers' outcomes.

### Declarations

**Author Contributions.** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Conflicts of Interest.** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Funding.** This study received no specific financial support.

**Ethical Approval.** The Ethical Committee of Zhetysu University has granted approval for this study on 25 February 2022.

**Data Availability Statement.** The data supporting the findings is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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## Appendix I

### *Teacher Interactive Skills Assessment*

1. Sensitive Responsiveness: The degree to which the teacher responds promptly and appropriately to students' signals and needs during the lesson. Example observations: The teacher notices when a student looks confused or lost and provides immediate clarification or support.

2. Respect for Students' Autonomy: The extent to which the teacher encourages students to try things out independently or in their own way, and acknowledges their perspectives and intentions. Example observations: The teacher allows students to choose their own topics for speaking activities or writing tasks and provides positive feedback on their choices.

3. Structuring and Limit Setting: The degree to which the teacher structures activities so that all students may benefit, and clearly communicates expectations to the students. Example observations: The teacher provides clear instructions for each activity, uses visual aids or gestures to enhance understanding, and sets clear boundaries for behavior during class.

4. Verbal Communication: The frequency and quality of verbal interactions between the teacher and the students. Example observations: The teacher engages in meaningful conversations with students, asks open-ended questions, and provides constructive feedback during discussions.

5. Developmental Stimulation: The degree to which the teacher stimulates students' language development, such as through vocabulary enrichment, sentence structure practice, or creative expression. Example observations: The teacher incorporates activities that encourage students to use new vocabulary or sentence structures, and provides opportunities for creative storytelling or role-playing.

6. Fostering Positive Peer Interactions: The degree to which the teacher recognizes and promotes positive interactions between students. Example observations: The teacher facilitates group activities where students take turns speaking and work collaboratively.