"WHAT IS IT THAT I DO IN THE CLASSROOM?": TEACHERS' FEEDBACK TO THEIR OWN CLASSROOM FEEDBACK

"SINIFTA NE YAPIYORUM?": ÖĞRETMENLERİN SINIFİÇİ GERİBİLDİRİMLERİ İLE İLGİLİ TEPKİLERİ

Bahar GÜN[*]

> Not to examine one's practice is irresponsible; to regard teaching as an experiment and to monitor one's performance is a professional act.
>
> J. Roddock, 1984

ABSTRACT

Based on the premise that those teachers who critically reflect on their performance can develop, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' judgments, thoughts and decisions through reflection, by focusing on one of the key classroom events, namely, giving feedback to learners. The differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers' reactions to their own feedback procedures were also explored. The results suggest that teachers' awareness of habits and mannerisms and the reasons for them increases as a result of reflection, and this leads them to reevaluate behaviours and consider changes. As for the difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers, no significant difference could be identified based on the data obtained in this particular study.

Key Words: Reflection, feedback, teacher development

ÖZET

Kendi performansları ile ilgili eleştirel bir şekilde yansıtma yapabilen öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerinden söz edilebilir. Bu noktadan hareketle, bu çalışma dil öğretmenlerinin öğrencilere verilen geribildirim süreçleri ile ilgili düşünceleri, yargıları ve kararlarını, kendilerine 'yansıtma' yapma fırsatı verilerek, daha iyi anlamayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışmada ayrıca deneyimli ve deneyimsiz dil öğretmenleri arasında geribildirim süreçleri açısından fark olup olmadığına da bakılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları yansıtma yapan öğretmenlerin ders içinde yaptıkları ve alışkanlıkları konusundaki farkındalıklarının arttığını ve bunun sonucunda kendilerini tekrar değerlendirip, değişime yönelik kararlar aldıklarını göstermektedir. Çalışmada incelenen verilere dayalı olarak deneyimli ve deneyimsiz öğretmenler arasında dikkat çekici bir farklılığa rastlanmamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yansıtma, geribildirim, öğretmen gelişimi

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'reflection' has now been accepted as a very significant aspect of teacher education around the world; therefore, it is commonly included in many professional development programs (Akbari**,** 2007, Farrell 2008, Leather and Popovic: 2008). Richards and Lockhart (1994) describe reflective approach to teaching as 'one in which teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching' (p.1). Regular reflection on classroom experiences allows teachers to

---

[*] Yrd.Doç.Dr., İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Meslek Yüksek Okulu bahar.gun@izmirekonomi.edu.tr

identify areas in their teaching that they feel need attention (Bailey et al, 1998), and therefore, 'it requires critical thought, self direction, and problem solving coupled with personal knowledge and self-awareness' (Chant, Heafner and Bennett in Lee 2007: 322). In that sense, reflection is "developing a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and the impact of teacher performance" (Osterman and Kottkamp,1993:19). According to Lemon (in Gill and Halim, 2006), reflection entails some key aspects:

1. purposeful thought
2. process of contemplation with openness to change
3. a willingness to learn
4. a sense of responsibility in trying one's best.

Scrivener (1994) poses a number of relevant questions regarding the teachers' self awareness of their work: "Do I actually know what I am doing? Do I ever stop and examine my actions, my intentions, my motives, my attitudes? I keep planning for the next lesson but to look back, remember and reflect on it seems harder to do" (p.195). Teachers seem to avoid reflection since they are overly concerned about getting work done and planning ahead; therefore, they should be encouraged to engage in reflection by adopting the four principles proposed above by Lemon.

1.1.1. Experienced and Inexperienced Teachers

The way the teachers differ, if at all, in terms of their level of reflection based on their teaching experience appears to be an interesting area to investigate. Research suggests that experienced and inexperienced teachers' instructional actions and decisions might differ. Some researchers claim, for example, that experienced teachers possess better knowledge base regarding students and the classroom environment, which enables them to make alternative choices without disrupting the flow of instruction, whereas inexperienced teachers have not developed a schema for interpreting and coping with what goes on during instruction; and they focus more on unexpected student behaviour and maintaining a good flow of instruction (Calderhead, 1981, 1983; Clark and Peterson, 1978; Housner and Griffey, 1983 in Johnson, 1992). To understand experienced and inexperienced second language teachers' instructional behaviours, we must first understand the thoughts and judgments that shape those behaviours (Freeman, 1990; Richards and Nunan, 1990 in Johnson, 1992). A retrospective reflection on one's own teaching provides and insightful way to a better understanding of second language instruction.

1.1.2. Aim

Based on the premise above, the present study aims to determine whether language teachers are conscious of classroom events when given the opportunity for retrospective reflection. Fanselow (1992) says that "when we look at the meaning of our communications, we may see that they are different from what we had thought they were before we looked" (p.79). It may, therefore, be, rather interesting to see how teachers respond to their own teaching by asking them to consciously consider their work, i.e. by giving them the opportunity to reflect.

There are obviously so many classroom events taking place during a single class hour, and it would be difficult to work on all of these at the same time. For this reason, one specific aspect of classroom teaching has been chosen for this study: the feedback given by teachers to students.

Feedback in teaching is defined as comments or information learners receive on the success of a learning task, either from the teacher or from other learners (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992), and "effective feedback to students has been identified as a key strategy in learning and teaching" (Ramsden, 1998 in Poulos and Mahony, 2008: 143).

This reported qualitative study, therefore, ultimately aims to enrich our understanding of one of the key classroom behaviours, namely, feedback; and more importantly, to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' judgments, thoughts and decisions through reflection by focusing on some of the ways teachers might be encouraged to think more systematically and critically about their feedback. It also aims to explore the differences, if any, between experienced and inexperienced teachers' reactions to their own feedback procedures. The study was conducted in the School of Foreign Languages, English Preparatory program at a university in Turkey.

2. METHODOLOGY
2.1. Classes Observed

The classes observed were all reading classes. Reading is one of the six main courses (speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar and core course) taught in the School of Foreign Languages, English Preparatory Program. In the observed reading classes, the focus was on teaching reading subskills such as skimming, scanning and identifying the main idea.

2.2. Teachers

Two experienced and two inexperienced (novice) teachers working in the school were selected for the study. It should be noted here that the definition of novice teachers vary from a maximum of five years of experience (Spector, 1989) to zero to two years' experience (Sarpy-Simpson, 2005). In this study, the latter definition was used, as the early months of a career were considered to be of interest.

The profile of the teachers in the study in terms of their level of experience was as follows:

Experienced Teachers
Teacher A: 10 years
Teacher B: 9 years
Inexperienced Teachers
Teacher C: 7 months
Teacher D: 20 months

All four teachers agreed to take part in the study on a voluntary basis but were not informed about the focus of observations in order to allow the collection of natural data.

The teachers were chosen by the researcher according to the amount of experience. It was also important to choose teachers working with the same proficiency level (low-intermediate in this case), to ensure the same materials were used in their observed classes. This was particularly taken into consideration as teachers' feedback can change according to the nature of the material used, and this might cause difficulty in comparing and contrasting different teachers' feedback strategies.

2.3. Students

The four groups taught by four different teachers all consisted of students from the lower-intermediate level, placed according to a placement test given at the beginning of the semester. Although they had different teachers for each course in their program, the same syllabus and the same materials were used across this level. All students were unaware of the focus of observation and recording.

2.4. Teaching Material

In the reading lessons that were observed and recorded, the main material was a handout about the location of topic sentences in a paragraph. The task was to read paragraphs to identify the topic sentence, which was in a different location in each paragraph, and then complete the related practice exercises.

2.5. Data Collection

The data consisted of observation of four classes, taught by two experienced and two inexperienced teachers. As well as audio recording the classes, the researcher took detailed notes of verbal and nonverbal feedback given. Immediately after each class session, the teachers attended a reflection session with the researcher. At the beginning of each session, each teacher was informed about the focus of the study: the main concern during the observation was the content-related feedback to students, i.e. the feedback that was related to the reading material taught in the particular classes. The teachers were also given some questions about their feedback behaviour, and it was made clear to them that this was not to evaluate or criticize, but to understand the thinking behind the particular feedback given.

During these reflective sessions, the teachers were asked to respond to the following kind of questions by listening to the recorded lessons:
-Why did you give such a feedback?
-How effective were you as a teacher giving feedback?
-Did you enable any kind of learning with the feedback you gave?
-What were the alternative options that you could have taken?
-How do you think your students felt about your feedback?
At the end of the reflective sessions the teachers were also asked some more general questions like:
-What do you believe about giving feedback?

-What have you just learnt about your feedback giving strategies?
-How much do you think this experience of retrospective reflection will contribute to your teaching?
The audio recordings of these reflective sessions formed the main data set to be analysed.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The main aim of this study was to make the observed teachers more conscious of their instructional actions; giving feedback in this particular case. The goal of providing teachers with opportunities to reflect on their teaching is not only for the understanding of actions, but the reasons behind them; that is, how instructional decisions are shaped by the thoughts and judgements about what takes place during instruction

One way to accomplish this goal is to use of audio recordings of lessons to prompt teacher recall of instructional decisions. This kind of self-analysis can enable teachers to recognize how they interpret and respond to the variety of student performance.
In this study a qualitative methodology was used. Transcribed audio recorded data consisting of segments of each teacher's interview was analyzed by identifying the thought units of the teachers, and by organizing these units into categories based on shared themes. That is, thematic analysis was applied to the data, from which five dimensions emerged:
1. Reactions to positive feedback
2. Reactions to use of praising words as positive feedback
3. Reactions to negative feedback
4. Reactions to the feedback based on teachers' own assumptions
5. Teachers' general feedback on their own classroom feedback procedures

Participant teachers' reactions for each category were noted in detail in the Appendix. A closer examination of teachers' reactions to their own feedback highlights both similarities and differences:
1. All four teachers used very similar methods for giving positive feedback: Repetition of the correct answer preceded or followed by an approval word, sometimes accompanied by nodding: 'OK' for teachers A and B; 'Yes' for C, and 'Alright' for D.
2. Teachers A, B and C were also similar to each other in terms of the thoughts they reported about the use of praising words. They all said they used such words deliberately rarely, only when their students accomplished a difficult task or answered a difficult question. Only teacher C said she was unaware that she almost never praised and reported that was missing from her teaching.
3. As for the negative feedback, all four teachers exhibited the same thought pattern. They all aimed at guiding the students to self correct their mistakes in similar, if not the same, ways. The most common feedback observed was the repetition of the wrong answer with questioning intonation, or sometimes the use of 'OR?' followed by a pause. Only teacher C claimed to prefer giving negative feedback nonverbally as opposed to verbally.

4. The teachers differed to a great extent in terms of the role assumptions played in their feedback. The nature of their assumptions was somewhat different from one another. Teachers A and C were similar because they both thought their students knew them very well, and therefore, understood the messages in every feedback given. Teacher B's assumption was related to the content and the nature of the course; the nature of feedback she would give was determined by taking into consideration the students' previous performance. Only D did not base feedback on any kind of assumption; she regarded this as being inappropriate.

One interesting point to be noted is the influence of their past teachers that they accepted as role models. Teacher B and teacher D both made an anecdotal note referring back to their own teachers, noting the influence of these teachers on their own feedback procedures.

When the general feedback to their own classroom feedback is considered, it can be seen that, in general terms, all were satisfied with their ability to give feedback. They noted, however, a tendency to repeat certain words, and that there was a lack of variety in their feedback. Only teacher C differed greatly from the others, stating his preference for non-verbal over verbal feedback, because he thought it was more effective. All four teachers noted that they found reflecting on their own teaching by listening to their recorded lessons an interesting experience. As for the difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers, no significant difference could be identified based on the data obtained.

4. CONCLUSION

The research study reported here aims to contribute to building a richer picture of teachers' reflections on their own classroom feedback. The results indicate that while there was a certain amount of variation in the way teachers gave feedback, there were a number of common themes such as their thoughts about giving positive and negative feedback and the use of praising words. The finding of no significant difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers is an interesting one, because it shows that teachers adopt a variety of strategies, largely on the basis of their beliefs about the feedback. This does not seem to be related to the number of years teaching, rather, it seems that teachers' decisions about giving feedback are, to some extent, based on their own experiences as learners. It was seen in the study that the feedback behaviour of teachers is likely to be influenced by their own teachers in the past, who acted as role models.

Another important conclusion of this study is the increased awareness of habits and mannerisms which can result from listening to the recordings of the lessons. As Freeman (in Pennington, 1995) points out, awareness is a key ingredient to teacher change and long-term development. The teachers in this study stated they were not always aware of what and why they were doing while giving feedback. Reflecting on feedback behaviour enabled teachers to become aware of their feedback habits and the reasons for them. This

in turn led them to reevaluate behaviours and consider changes. These included more variety in feedback techniques, and for one teacher, the use of praising words, which had previously been neglected

The study also showed that teachers' priorities in structuring the feedback they gave depended crucially on their assumptions about learning and teaching, as well as about students. Three of the teachers answered the question "why such feedback?" referring to assumptions on student performance, students' perceptions of their roles as teachers, as well as the nature of the course taught.
In conclusion, studies exploring the cognitive dimensions of how second language teachers' thoughts, judgments and decisions influence the nature of instruction are needed to gain a better understanding of language classroom processes. The findings of the studies of this nature may also shed light upon the design of more insightful and effective in-service and pre-service teacher training programs.

REFERENCES

Akbari, R. (2007). Reflections on reflection: a critical appraisal of reflective practice in L2 teacher education, *System*, 35, 192–207

Bailey.F., Hawkins, M., Irujo, S., Larsen-Freeman, D., Rintell, E. & Willett, J. (1998). Language teacher educators collaborative conversations. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 3, 536-546

Fanselow, J.F. (1992). *Contrasting Conversations*. Longman: New York

Farrell, T.S.C. (2008). Critical incidents in ELT initial teacher training. *ELT Journal* 62, 1, 3-10

Gill, G.K. & Halim, N.A. (2006). *Reflection in action: Examining the place, impact and management issues surrounding the integration of reflection in classroom practice.* AARE 2006 Conference, Adelaide, Engaging Pedagogies, 1-18

Johnson, K.E. (1992). Learning to teach: Instructional actions and decisions of pre-service ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26,3, 507-535

Leather,S.and R. Popovic (2008). Time for reflection. *English Teaching Professional*, 55, 1-3

Lee, I. (2007). Preparing pre-service English teachers for reflective practice. *ELT Journal* 61,4, 321-329

Osterman, K.F., & Kottkamp, R.B.(1993). *Reflective practice for educators: Improving schooling through professional development.* Newberry Park, CA: Corwin Press

Pennington, M.C. (1995). The teacher change cycle. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29,4, 705-729

Poulos, A. & Mahony, M.J. (2008). Effectiveness of feedback: the students' perspective. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education. 33, 2, 143-154

Richards, J. C. & C. Lockhart**.** (1994). *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Richards,J., Platt,J.&Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Longman

Ruddock, J. (1984). Teaching as an art, Teacher research and research-based teacher

education. Second Annual Lawrence Stenhouse Memorial Lecture. University of East Anglia. (in Williams, M. & Burden, R. L. *Psychology for language teachers*: *A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Sarpy-Simpson &Claudine, L. (2005). *The perceptions of novice and veteran teachers on the role of the principal in the retention of urban novice teachers*. Dissertation, Graduate Studies of Texas, A&M University

Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning Teaching*. Hienemann: Oxford

Spector, B. (1989). *Empowering teachers. Survival and development.* Kendall-Hunt

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

"Yansıtma" kavramı, dünyanın her yerinde öğretmen eğitiminin önemli bir parçası olarak kabul edilmekte ve mesleki gelişim programlarında yerini almaktadır (Akbari, 2007, Farell, 2008). Yansıtma, ana hatlarıyla bir öğretmenin kendi mesleki performansı ile ilgili veriler toplayıp, inanç ve davranışlarını inceleyerek kendi öğretmenliğine eleştirel bir gözle bakması demektir (Richards ve Lockhart, 1994). Bir öğretmenin düzenli olarak dersleri ile ilgili yansıtma yapması, onun güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini tespit etmesini ve buna bağlı olarak mesleki gelişimini olumlu etkileyecek kararlar almasını sağlar. Scrivener'ın (1994) belirttiği gibi çoğu kez öğretmenler ileriki derslerinde ne yapacaklarına odaklanıp yansıtmaya çok vakit ayırmazlar ve "tam olarak derste ne yapıyorum? Biraz durup yaptıklarım, inandıklarım, yapmak istediklerimle ilgili düşünüyor muyum?" sorularını kendilerine sormazlar. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin daha çok ve düzenli bir şekilde yansıtma yapmaya teşvik edilmeleri gerekir.

Mesleki deneyime bağlı olarak yansıtmanın değişip değişmediği de ilginç bir araştırma konusu olabilir. Literatürdeki çalışmalar deneyimli ve deneyimsiz öğretmenler arasında öğrenciler ve sınıf ortamı ile ilgili bilgi düzeyi ve buna bağlı uygulamaları açısından farklılıklar olduğunu göstermiştir (Johnson, 1992). Bu noktadan hareketle bu çalışma, kendilerine yansıtma fırsatı verildiğinde dil öğretmenlerin sınıfta olanların ne kadar bilincinde oldukları, derste yaptıklarına tepkilerinin ne olduğu, ve tüm bunların içinde deneyimin bir değişken olup olmadığı sorularını yanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada sınıf içinde yer alan pek çok olaydan sadece 'öğretmen tarafından dersle ilgili olarak öğrencilere verilen geribildirim süreçleri' incelenecek nokta olarak seçilmiş ve öğretmenlerin bu konu ile ilgili düşünce, yargı ve kararlarının daha iyi anlaşılması hedeflenmiştir.

Çalışma, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde bulunan bir Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda gerçekleştirilmiş, bu okuldaki İngilizce hazırlık programında görev yapan ikisi deneyimli, ikisi deneyimsiz toplam dört öğretmen çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin tümü 'orta düzey altı' seviyesinde yer alan öğrencilere ders vermişlerdir. Derste verilen geribildirimlerin dersin içeriğine ve amaçlarına göre farklılık gösterebileceği düşünülerek, dört dil öğretmeni tarafından öğretilen aynı içerikli ve amaçlı dört 'okuma-

anlama' dersi araştırmacı tarafından gözlenmiş, derslerin ses kayıtları alınmış ve ayrıca araştırmacı tarafından dersler süresince geribildirim süreçleri ile ilgili detaylı notlar alınmıştır.

Gözlemlenen derslerde alınan ses kayıtları, derslerden hemen sonra her bir öğretmenle bir araya gelinerek yapılan yansıtma oturumlarında öğretmenlere dinletilmiş ve aşağıdaki türden sorulara yanıt vermeleri beklenmiştir:

- Neden böyle bir geribildirim verdiniz?
- Sizce verdiğiniz bu geribildirim(ler) etkili oldu mu?
- Kullanabileceğiniz başka seçenekleriniz var mıydı?
- Geribildirim ile ilgili genel düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
- Kendi geribildirim stratejileriniz ile ilgili ne öğrendiniz?
- Sınıf içi geribildirimleriniz ile ilgili şu anda yapmış olduğunuz yansıtma öğretmenliğinize nasıl katkıda bulunacak?

Çalışmaya katılan dört öğretmen ile yapılan bu yansıtma oturumlarının da ayrıca ses kaydı alınmış ve bu kayıtlar çalışmada incelenecek ana veri tabanını oluşturmuştur. Veri analizinde niteliksel yöntem kullanılarak ses kayıtlarının transkripti çıkarılmış, öğretmenlerin görüşleri ortak temalar belirlenerek sınıflandırılmış ve aşağıda belirtilen beş boyut ortaya çıkmıştır:

1. Olumlu geribildirimlere tepkiler
2. Övgü kelimelerinin olumlu geribildirim olarak kullanımına tepkiler
3. Olumsuz geribildirimlere tepkiler
4. Öğretmenlerin kendi varsayımlarına dayalı verdikleri geribildirimlere tepkiler
5. Öğretmenlerin sınıf içi geribildirim süreçleri ile ilgili genel tepkiler

Öğretmenlerin her bir kategori ile ilgili detaylı tepkileri çalışmanın ekinde görülebilir. Öğretmenlerin tepkileri dikkatle incelendiğinde aşağıda belirtilen benzerlik ve farklılıklar ortaya çıkmıştır:
1. Her dört öğretmenin de benzer şekilde olumlu geribildirim verdikleri belirlenmiştir.
2. Öğretmenlerin üçü övgü kelimelerini bilinçli bir şekilde az kullandıklarını belirtmiş, sadece bir öğretmen bu tür kelimeleri hiç kullanmadığını fark ettiğini ve bunun bir eksiklik olduğunu dile getirmiştir.
3. Olumsuz geribildirim verme açısından öğretmenlerin tümünün benzer stratejiler uygulandığı gözlenmiş, sadece bir öğretmen sözel olumsuz geribildirim yerine sözel olmayanı tercih ettiğini belirtmiştir.
4. Kendi varsayımlarına dayalı olarak verdikleri geribildirim açısından öğretmenler farklılık göstermişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin ikisi öğrencilerini çok iyi tanıdıklarını ve verdikleri her geribildirimin onlar tarafından doğru algılandığına inandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bir öğretmen geribildirimlerin öğrencilerin geçmiş performansları göz önünde bulundurularak verilmesi gerektiğine inandığını ifade etmiş; bir diğeri ise hiçbir zaman varsayıma dayalı geribildirim vermediğini, bunun doğru bir davranış olmadığını düşündüğünü dile getirmiştir.

Kendi geribildirimleri ile ilgili genel görüşleri sorulduğunda, çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerin tümü kullandıkları geribildirim stratejileri ile ilgili memnuniyetlerini dile getirmiş, ancak geliştirilmesi gereken bazı noktalar tespit etmişlerdir. Bunların arasında, hep aynı ifadelerin yerine daha çeşitli ifade kullanmaları gerektiği ve kullana geldikleri stratejilere yenilerini ekleme ihtiyacı öne çıkmaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuçları deneyimli ve deneyimsiz öğretmenler arasında geribildirim verme süreçleri açısından çok büyük bir farklılık olmadığını, öğretmenlerin kendi düşünce ve inançlarına göre geribildirim süreçlerini belirlediklerini göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın bir başka ve en önemli sonucu öğretmenlerin kendi kayda alınış derslerini dinleyerek, farkındalık düzeylerinin kesinlikle artması ve bunun sonucunda kendilerini tekrar değerlendirip, değişime yönelik kararlar almalarıdır Sonuç olarak, dil öğretmenlerinin düşünce, yargı ve kararlarının bilişsel boyutlarının incelenmesine yönelik çalışmaların dil sınıflarında olanları daha iyi anlamamız açısından önemi kaçınılmazdır. Bu türden çalışmaların sonuçları daha öngörülü ve etkin hizmet-öncesi ve hizmet-içi öğretmen eğitimi programlarının planlanmasında da çok önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır.

APPENDIX

Table 1. TEACHER A (Experienced)

Theme 1: Positive Feedback

Feedback: The most common feedback observed during the lesson was: OK + Repetition of the correct answer, or repetition of the correct answer + OK
Teacher's reaction: "I want to make sure that everybody in the class hears the correct answer. That's why I repeat it. 'OK' is the indication of approval".

Theme 2: The Use of Praising Words

Feedback: Throughout the lesson the teacher praised students only three times by saying: "OK, very good.. thank you" , "Yes.. You're great" , "Congratulations"
Teacher's reaction: "I rarely use such praising words. Only when necessary.. when their correct answers make me happy for example… when they are able to answer a difficult question, or accomplish a difficult task. This is kind of rewarding them.. These words motivate them to participate in the lesson more".

Theme 3: Negative Feedback

Feedback: The teacher repeated the student's answer with questioning intonation.
Teacher's reaction: "I always try to get them to self-correct their mistakes. Teacher's immediate correction is not a good way for me. Using a question intonation I want them to revise their answer".

Theme 4: Feedback Based on Teacher's Assumptions

Feedback: The teacher repeated the students' answer followed by "OR" with question intonation.
Teacher's reaction: This is a topic they are familiar with. They studied the same stuff last week. That's why I asked "Or?"
The teacher was asked if the student understood the message in this remark.
Teacher's reaction: "They know my teaching style, so I am sure they understood what I meant"

Theme 5: Teacher's General Feedback to Her Own Classroom Feedback

 "I generally like the feedback I gave in my class. I give so much feedback and I believe my feedback is sufficient and it enhances learning. To me giving feedback is extremely important. One of my teachers at school had an influence on me. When I was a practicing teacher that teacher had told me that I was not giving enough feedback. I have never forgotten this since then.
I loved listening to my audio recorded teaching. What I do in the classroom is mostly spontaneous. Now when I listen to myself teach I understand why I am doing what I am doing; but in the class I don't stop to think what I do. I think this is something that comes along with experience.
The only thing I did not like about my feedback behaviour is the excessive use of "OK" during the lesson. I never knew I was using so many "OK"s. From today on I will be more careful about the use of "OK".

Table 2. TEACHER B (Experienced)

Theme 1: Positive Feedback

Feedback: The most common feedback she gave was: OK + repetition of the correct answer, or Repetition of the correct answer + OK
Teacher's reaction: "I repeat correct answers because I want to make sure that everybody in the class hears the correct answer. Then I say "OK" meaning I approve the answer. OK sometimes means we finished that, now we can work on the next one. It is like a transition".

Theme 2: The Use of Praising Words

Feedback: Only one instance of the use of praising words was observed: "Very Good"
Teacher's reaction: I don't use such praising words very often. I used 'very good' here because it was a difficult paragraph. If a teacher uses praise excessively this might have a negative effect on students. They start thinking they are doing everything perfectly. To me, a teacher must use praise cautiously".

Theme 3: Negative Feedback

Feedback: The teacher repeated the student's wrong answer followed by "OR?" with question intonation; or she said "I want you to read the paragraph again. Carefully please".
Teacher's reaction: "I say these to get the students to self-correct their mistakes. I try to tell them they are not giving the correct answer. I am doing this indirectly, without being so negative".

Theme 4: Feedback Based on Teacher's Assumptions

Feedback: In one instance, the teacher continued the lesson making another explanation after waiting for a short while for the students to answer the question she asked. The students did not answer the question.
Teacher's reaction: "Here I assume my explanations were sufficient and they understood. They are supposed to know the answer. If it had been a difficult question I would have waited longer for the answer".

Theme 5: Teacher's General Feedback to Her Own Classroom Feedback

"In general, I was good as a teacher giving feedback. The negative thing about my feedback behaviour is that I am repeating myself very often. I use "OK" too much, for example. I could have used some other phrases like 'That's right, fine, alright'. The excessive use of OK and constant repetition of correct answer might be boring for the students.
I think the classroom feedback changes depending on the dynamics of a particular student group. A teacher can tell what one works with one group and what does not. I used to use a lot of praising words with this group earlier, for example. I observed this caused some students to misbehave. That's why I use them rarely now. What's more, what we worked on in class today was not very difficult. They were familiar with the topic. I should and do praise them only when they accomplish a difficult task"

Table 3. TEACHER C (Inexperienced)

Theme 1: Positive Feedback

Feedback: The most common feedback he used was: YES + Repetition of the correct answer, or Repetition of the correct answer + YES

Teacher's reaction: (Laughing) "That's very simple feedback. With this feedback I mean 'yes, this is the correct answer.. should I use 'yeah!' or 'that's right'? Well… I don't know… 'yes' sounds more natural to me".

Theme 2: The Use of Praising Words

Feedback: Throughout the lesson the teacher used the words 'very good, congratulations' only once.

Teacher's reaction: I am very careful about the use of such words. I believe that the excessive use of such words can become meaningless after a while. That's why I rarely use them".

Theme 3: Negative Feedback

Feedback: The teacher mostly gave non-verbal negative feedback using signals meaning the answer was not correct (raising eyebrows and the like).

Teacher's reaction: "I give non-verbal feedback very often. To tell the students directly 'that's wrong' or 'try it again' might be irritating for them. Using gestures is less discouraging to me. This way I can make them think once more about their answers. Sometimes I point to one student with my head and say 'you are wrong' with a smile on my face. I do it jokingly"

In another instance, the teacher repeated the student's wrong answer followed by 'OR' with a questioning intonation and a pause.

Teacher's reaction: "Here I mean to say 'are you sure?' They understand their answer is wrong. By pausing a little I give them time and opportunity to self-correct".

Theme 4: Feedback Based on Teacher's Assumptions

Feedback: The teacher was asked if the students got the messages correctly in all the non-verbal feedback he gave.

Teacher's reaction: "They know me very well. They understand my sense of humour. I don't think they are offended. I use body language, mimes and gestures to give positive feedback as well… they know and they understand".

Theme 5: Teacher's General Feedback to Her Own Classroom Feedback

"Explaining why I did all these things is difficult for me. A teacher does not think about these things while teaching. S/he is more concerned about what the next activity is, how long it should last etc. The feedback given is mostly spontaneous, and it changes from teacher to teacher depending on his/her personality. If you ask me, giving effective feedback has got to do with a teacher's ability. I believe I use feedback effectively. I, personally, use non-verbal feedback more than verbal feedback. I am aware that I don't use variety of verbal feedback. I should change this, I think. Maybe I should think of other words I could use instead of 'yes'. I have never done this so far because I am very happy with my non-verbal feedback. Maybe I should think about this issue more in the future"

Table 4. TEACHER D (Inexperienced)

Theme 1: Positive Feedback

<u>Feedback</u>: The most common feedback she used was: Repetition of the correct answer + ALRIGHT and nodding
<u>Teacher's reaction</u>: "I approve the answer. I am aware that I nod very often. I generally use miming and gestures while giving feedback. One of my university professors would use body language so much. I think I was influenced by him".

Theme 2: The Use of Praising Words

<u>Feedback</u>: In the lesson observed the teacher did not use any praising words. She was asked why not.
<u>Teacher's reaction</u>: **"**To tell the truth, I was not aware at all that I was not using praising words. I should use them, I think. From today on, I should use them more".

Theme 3: Negative Feedback

<u>Feedback</u>: One example was: "Is it the first one?... or …(pause)… the second?"
<u>Teacher's reaction</u>: "I am guiding them to self-correct. I am giving them an alternative to get them to revise their answer".
Another example was: "Benefits, eh? Any other?"
<u>Teacher's reaction</u>: "Here, I want to show them that they are on the right track, getting closer to the exact answer".

Theme 4: Feedback Based on Teacher's Assumptions

<u>Feedback</u>: No instance of this category was observed in this particular teacher's class.
<u>Teacher's reaction</u>:" I never give feedback based on some assumptions like 'these students know me very well, so they will understand what I mean'… every single student has a different way of thinking, so I cannot make generalizations".

Theme 5: Teacher's General Feedback to Her Own Classroom Feedback

"There is not much variety in the positive feedback I give. I used 'alright' way too much. This could become meaningless for the students after a while. I realize that I should use more variety of feedback in my classes. Also, the same type of feedback could be given using different intonation within the same lesson. I will try this as well. Listening to myself teach was very interesting. I learnt a lot about my feedback behaviour".