



Making Sense of Experienced Teachers' Interactive Decisions: Implications for Expertise in Teaching

Bahar Gün

Asst. Prof., İzmir University of Economics, Turkey, bahar.gun@ieu.edu.tr

Teachers' decision making has always been an area of curiosity in many studies related to teachers and teaching. One approach to understanding teachers' decisions is through the analysis of their reflection-in-action behaviours. This study, based on the premise that one can gain understanding from examining experienced teachers' classroom performances, focuses on the interactive decisions made by ten experienced language teachers. The study presents the findings of an analysis of similarities in the motivations behind teachers' interactive decisions, as demonstrated in their verbal reports following the video recorded lesson observations. These findings show that there are both shared pedagogical and affective attributes among participant teachers. These results, and the insight they give into experienced teachers' decision making are potentially beneficial for all pre-service and practising teachers.

Keywords: Experienced Teachers, Interactive Decision Making, Reflection-In-Action, Expertise, Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

It is well recognized that teaching is a complex and contingent activity. What teachers do in class, and what they think before and during teaching, therefore, has become an important focus for educational researchers (Borg, 2006). Looking into the classroom is a constant 'curious' source of investigation because classrooms include "multidimensionality, simultaneity, immediacy, and unpredictability...and teachers need to be able to process simultaneously transmitted information very quickly, to attend to multiple events simultaneously" (Tsui, 2003 p.30).

Teachers are engaged in certain actions as they teach; and because teaching is a complex cognitive skill, it requires careful planning and rapid decision making regarding the complexities of multidimensional classroom situations. Teachers have different ways of dealing with these aspects of classroom teaching and, an analysis of strategies used in the classroom will bring insight into the act of teaching. A better understanding of teachers' classroom decisions requires an in-depth analysis of their deliberations about the decisions they make while teaching (Bartlett, 1990). Because it is impossible at present to observe directly the teachers' internal thought processes, researchers analyse teachers' decision making processes indirectly, mainly, through getting them to reflect on their teaching.

Reflection-in Action

One of the most influential trends in education in the past decades is the notion of reflective teaching, which is based on the model proposed by Donald Schön (1987). This particular model highlights the importance of reflecting for the purpose of making sense of teachers' problem-solving and decision-making. Schön's model emphasizes two main processes: reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action is concerned with what teachers are doing in the classroom while they are doing it, that is, it occurs in the midst of acting (Urzúa&Vásquez, 2008; Farrell, 2003; Leng, 2007; El-Dib, 2007). According to Schön (in Farrell, 2003), "reflection-in-action is a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation" (p.16); this allows teachers to reshape what they are working on while they are working on it (in Singh, 2008). In this process, thinking can be recalled and then shared later (Schön, 1987). Reflection-on action, on the other hand, is retrospective in nature, and it denotes the kind of reflection that occurs after action has been taken (Urzúa &Vásquez, 2008; Farrell, 2003, El-Dib, 2007).

When teachers are asked to reflect on teaching, they tend to reflect on the actions rather than the reasons behind them. Furthermore, some teachers are unable to provide rationale behind their actions when asked (Lange, 1990). Reflection-in-action is believed to be the process that experienced teachers achieve; it is a state in which teachers feel comfortable reflecting on the rationale behind their actions; such teachers have the benefit of knowledge and experience, which facilitates their decision making during and after teaching. It might prove very useful, therefore, to analyse these teachers' reflection-in-action behaviours, or their pedagogical thoughts, as Gatlant (1999) calls it, to provide a grounded perspective of the notion of 'expertise' in teaching.

Preactive and Interactive Decisions

Closely linked to Schön's reflection-in-action model are the concepts of 'preactive and interactive decisions' by teachers. Jackson (in Tsui, 2003) distinguishes between 'preactive' and 'interactive' phases of teaching: "The former refers to the period before teaching, when teachers are planning the lesson and evaluating and selecting teaching methods and materials; the latter refers to the time when teachers are interacting with students in the classroom" (p.22).

Regular lesson planning is a professional responsibility. In designing these 'road maps' to their destinations, teachers make preactive decisions to determine the content, techniques, materials, timing, staging and the methods of evaluation. Lesson plans mostly serve to provide a framework for any given lesson; however, deviations and/or departing from the lesson plans are extremely frequent. As noted by Allwright and Bailey (in Bailey, 1996), teachers and learners actually coproduce a lesson plan in the natural course of a lesson. They say:

It is likely that every teacher has had the experience of having something unexpected occur during a lesson. Whether it leads to derailment of the lesson or a contribution to learning is often largely a matter of how the teacher reacts

to the unexpected, and the extent to which the co-production is encouraged or stifled (p.19).

This suggests that teachers have to make interactive decisions when faced with unpredictable, unexpected or surprising events; and it is the lesson plan that provides a framework for the interactive decisions during the lesson (Nunan, 1992).

Strict adherence to a lesson plan is uncommon especially among experienced teachers. A study conducted on the preactive and interactive decisions of less and more experienced pre-service teachers showed that when lesson plans were not progressing as planned, more experienced teachers made adjustments whereas less experienced teachers did not (Byra&Sherman, 1993). In Westerman's (1991) study, in which he compared expert and novice teachers, it was seen that expert teachers were more aware of the students during the preactive phase, and they monitored their students' behaviour and learning more often during the interactive phase. Similarly, Johnson's (1992) study on pre-service ESL teachers showed that they relied on a limited number of instructional routines and their concerns were mainly limited to inappropriate student responses and maintaining the flow of lessons. She suggested that pre-service teachers should make themselves familiar with the routines and patterns that experienced teachers rely on in order to reduce the number of conscious decisions made while teaching. Some other studies that investigated the nature of the interactive decisions made by experienced teachers showed that the decisions involved classroom management and class organization as well as the management of content, participants and face (Nunan, 1992; Malcolm, 1991). In their studies focusing on the reasons behind deviations from lesson plans, Bailey (1996) and Nunan (in Bailey, 1996) highlighted themes from post-lesson interviews with subject teachers: Serve the common good, teach to the moment, further the lesson, accommodate students' learning styles, promote students' involvement, and distribute the wealth (Bailey themes); Getting the action going, maintaining control over the flow of events and the instructional process (Nunan themes).

The findings from studies comparing expert and novice teachers (Tsui, 2003; Byra&Sherman, 1993; Westerman, 1991; Putman&Duffy, 1984; Ho&Liu, 2005) have provided teacher educators and researchers with a considerable amount of information about differences between teachers' preactive and interactive decision making, as well as their pedagogical knowledge. These studies confirm that expert teachers possess a richer knowledge structure of teaching; they are better skilled at pedagogical manoeuvring, and have a wider repertoire of back-up plans when instant classroom decisions are deemed necessary. Overall, these studies are important in the sense that they illustrate the complexity of interactive decision making in classroom settings.

'Expertise' in Language Teaching

The discussions in teachers' reflection-in action behaviour and interactive decisions made in relation to their reflections point to a need to analyze the concept of 'expertise' in teaching; and the validity of studying 'expert' teacher behaviours. As suggested by Smith and Strahan (2004), studies describing what expert teachers do and say contribute to our understanding of the complexity of expertise in teaching.

What makes a teacher an 'expert' teacher? There is so much research seeking the traits of expert teachers. As Kryszewska (2007:181) states "the areas of expertise of a teacher are still being defined and are less clear cut", therefore, any further studies focusing on expertise is a valuable contribution considering how their characteristics would shed light on the 'learning' of pre- and in-service teachers. Johnson (2010) describes an expert teacher as someone who is particularly skilled in a specific area; and Tsui (2009) summarizes the definitions of expertise made in many studies as a state of superior performance achieved after a number of years of experience and practice and it is characterized by efficiency, automaticity, effortlessness and fluidity. Hence, the notion of 'expertise' is often bound up with years of experience. While experience is a necessary condition for the development of expertise, it is not a sufficient condition. (p.422).

As these definitions suggest, expert teachers are the experienced teachers who feel the need to grow and to reconstruct their experience as well as their own educational perspective (Farrell, 2003). The only way to achieve this change from an experienced teacher to an expert teacher is by engaging in critical reflection, which allows the development of the skills and attitudes necessary for self-directed development (Brandt, 2008). Similarly, Pennington (in Farrell, 2003) points out that teacher development requires an awareness of the need for change, and the two key components of change, according to her, are innovation and critical reflection.

There are various methods of studying the notion of 'expertise' in its close relation to reflection. The most common are psychological tests, case studies, verbal reports in the forms of think-alouds, and stimulated recall techniques (Johnson, 2010). Verbalizations of experience provide a window into teachers' professional identities (Urzúa,&Vásquez, 2008). The studies using these methods mostly compare expert teachers with non-experts. These studies concluded that the main difference between the experts and non-experts is the way they complete their allotted tasks, namely, experts are better skilled at problem solving by using higher level mental resources, whereas non-experts invest less of their mental resources. While comparative studies have an important contribution, a deeper understanding of expertise in language teaching may result from a study that, rather than comparing expert and non-expert, focuses solely on expert teachers in a more detailed way.

METHOD

Aim

A wide range of educational practices now centre around reflection and reflective thinking; and many educators consider Schön's notion of reflective practice as a way to connect cognitive and procedural domains such as problem-solving, decision-making and innovation (Urzúa&Vásquez, 2008). This raises the important issue of how reflection can be measured (El-Dib, 2007). The position adopted in this study is that reflection can be observed in discourse, that is, the ability to articulate the knowledge that a teacher possesses and practises. As many teachers are novices in the verbalization

of their reflections, a detailed examination of the process of reflection-in-action would seem to be beneficial.

Some studies (Shavelson&Stern in Putnam&Duffy, 1984; Snow in Tsui, 2003) have already attempted to create models of teachers' decision making during interactive teaching. However, as Calderhead (in Tsui, 2003) argues, not all decisions made by teachers follow the same model, and he distinguishes between three types of interactive decisions:

- (1) reflective decisions: these involve a great deal of thinking, identifying alternatives and evaluating possible results
- (2) immediate decisions: these are made instantaneously with little time for considering alternatives and evaluating the outcomes
- (3) routine decisions: these are automatic, made for recurrent situations.

Following this line of thinking, the study at hand aims to consider experienced teachers' immediate and routine decisions, and to examine closely their instructional thoughts and decision making in the classroom. This study, in a sense, is an attempt to capture experienced teachers' cognitive processes in the interactive phase of their teaching. This has the potential to increase our understanding of the factors that distinguish experts from the non-experts, and the skills needed in addition to training and experience to foster continuing growth in competence. The ultimate aim of the study, therefore, is to provide an additional point of reference in our expanding knowledge base on expertise in language teaching.

With these aims in mind, the study attempts to answer the following question:

What are the common themes in the reported reflections of experienced teachers regarding their interactive decisions, and how are these teachers similar in terms of their interactive decisions?

Research Design

This investigation of the nature of the decisions made by experienced teachers in implementing their lesson plans was conducted at a private English-medium university in Turkey. Ten teachers from the intensive English preparatory program were chosen for inclusion in the study. These teachers were chosen by the researcher based on end of year academic reviews in the form of 'student evaluation of teachers' for the previous 4 years. In addition, feedback reports from authorities- teacher trainers, academic coordinators- at the institution were used as independent confirmation that they were excellent, experienced teachers who could easily be called as 'expert' teachers.

The teachers involved in the study were 3 male and 7 female teachers. Only 2 were native speakers of English, the others were Turkish nationals. Their ages ranged from 29 to 50; and the years of experience in language teaching ranged between 10 and 32 years. All these teachers participated in the study on a voluntary basis, after reading and signing the informed consent form prepared by the researcher.

In this research, qualitative design was adopted since this is normally appropriate for studies that seek to gain insight into the nature of a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The data was collected following the steps below:

- (1) After an observation was scheduled for each teacher, they were requested to e-mail a lesson plan, on a standard template to ensure consistency, to the researcher. This plan included lesson aims, class profile, time-table fit, stages, procedures, timing, patterns of interaction and assumptions.
- (2) The observed lessons were video-recorded, and during the observations, the researcher, following the lesson from the lesson plan at hand, took detailed notes about all incidents of deviation from the lesson plan.
- (3) After the observations, a follow-up interview was scheduled for each teacher the same day or the day after. These interviews were in the form of stimulated recall interviews conducted to examine the teachers' interactive decisions. This verbal recall technique was used in the study because it is one of the very limited number of techniques available for probing what goes on teachers' heads while teaching (Gatbonton, 1999).

While viewing their teaching videos, the teachers were asked to recollect aloud-into an ongoing tape recorder- what they were thinking each time when they deviated from the lesson plans. The main focus was how they deviated from their lesson plans. Regarding their lesson plans, they were asked to explain their interactive decisions for each incidence of change, omission or addition; and the audio recordings from these interviews provided the verbal recall data for the study.

Data Analysis

After an analysis of the audio recordings, each teacher response was organized in terms of the principles which guided the interactive decisions, and then categorized based on shared themes. This study utilized the similarity-based category of experienced teachers based on the premise that teaching expertise should be viewed as a category structured by similarities that are shared by expert teachers, rather than by a set of necessary and sufficient features (Sternberg & Horvath in Smith & Strahan, 2004). A theme was only considered common when it was mentioned by at least 6 out of the 10 teachers.

FINDINGS

Descriptive analysis of the data revealed two main categories of the shared themes: Pedagogical and Affective. Other themes that were not as common but interesting for the exploration of expertise were also discussed separately under different headings. One point of note emerging from the observations was that 9 out of 10 teachers were not able to cover the lesson plans they had prepared. This particular finding is in line with the research results by Bailey (1996) and Nunan (1996) highlighting the fact that deviation from the lesson plan is a common characteristic of experienced teachers.

Direct quotations from the interviews have been used in the presentations of data to clarify and strengthen the reported findings.

Pedagogical Themes

Consolidation

7 out of 10 teachers reported deviating from the lesson plan in order to consolidate the previously taught items. It was very impressive to watch these teachers remember the contents of the past lessons, confirming the theory that expert teachers have a rich memory of previous lessons which they can call on as they teach (Tsui, 2003). It appears that experienced teachers use the retrieval procedures more effectively, and this can be attributed to the fact that these teachers encounter a number of repetitive and similar incidents, which facilitates retrieval when needed.

The following quotes from the interviews with teachers show how important consolidating students' knowledge is for these experienced teachers with effective memory use:

"let somebody do something-structure was covered in a previous lesson, but it was not detailed and they had not understood it very well, so when it came up in the lesson I spent extra time on it, which was not part of my plan".

"I have very good memory.. I remember in detail what I taught them previously and make decisions accordingly".

"I squeezed in a quick review of the previously learnt discourse markers.. this was not in the plan".

'Investment for future'

Results of the verbal recall data analysis indicate that 'investment for future' (one of the teachers used this exact phrase and it was made one of the main themes) was one of the main reasons why most of the teachers involved in the study deviated from their lesson plans. The following extracts from the audio recordings clarify what exactly this means to these teachers:

"Having the knowledge of what is coming next in the future in the syllabus, I introduce some points... it is kind of an investment for the future".

" I started an unplanned' university education' discussion because the next task was to write an e-mail to a friend about this. I wanted them to be exposed to some words and concepts".

"I spent such long time explaining that one word because it was going to be used often in the rest of the lesson. It was a key word".

Addressing emerging needs

The most common theme occurring in the analysis was the teachers' response regarding changing the lesson plans in order to address the emerging needs of the students. 8 teachers reported making instant decisions based on their assessment of the situation. This can be considered as another confirmation of expert teachers' ability to analyze and interpret classroom events and react by making educated decisions to enhance student

learning. As Kryszewska (2007) notes, these teachers have a vast repertoire of various scenarios which they can easily activate when deemed necessary.

The selected quotes below illustrate this particular theme:

“Pronunciation drilling was also something I decided to do right then and there because I felt the need for it.”

“The second pair work activity was not planned either. I decided to do it that way there. I thought they should be able to do it in pairs”.

“In my lesson plan there were more words to be drilled, however, in the lesson I decided to focus on 3 of them only because I heard a few students mispronounced them”.

“The warm-up part took a lot longer than planned because students had problems with a lot of words, in terms of meaning, pronunciation and spelling”.

Knowledge of students

Answering the question “why did you make this decision?”, 6 teachers referred to their students’ prior learning, academic performances, and abilities. A full understanding of students’ language learning capabilities can be considered as an important asset of these experienced teachers.

The 3 quotes below exemplify and confirm the teachers’ knowledge about their students and how carefully they monitor their progress:

“It is mostly a matter of knowing the students well, to be aware of what they can/cannot do with the language at their level...I, for example, knew the speaking activity wouldn’t last any longer than it did; therefore, I cut the activity short... shorter than planned”.

“The word ‘sign’ came from the students, I didn’t expect that. I took my time to explain the word in English.. in my other classes I would do that in Turkish. These students are good so I did it in English”.

“I know what my students are capable of doing. I spent extra time on this grammar point because I knew they found it very confusing”.

Knowledge of lesson material

As with the knowledge of their students’ ability, knowledge of the lesson materials used appeared to play an important role in teachers’ interactive decisions. 6 teachers reported making instant decisions based on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson material.

The quotes that follow show how these teachers had to make instantaneous material-related decisions by ‘reflecting-in-action’:

“Knowing the course material well also affects the spontaneous decisions. Because I taught the same material to a better group of students, I knew what would/wouldn’t work with this group of students”.

“I had kind of guessed the listening text was too difficult for them, so during the lesson I skipped the ‘listening for specific information’ task”.

Exploiting all opportunities to teach

One of the more interesting points observed, and also the one that emerged as one of the main pedagogical themes was the teachers’ keen desire to exploit every available opportunity to teach new language points by taking a flexible view of the lesson plan. This was done with great skill, without disrupting the flow of lessons or abandoning the lesson objectives.

As the sample quotes below indicate, 6 teachers said it was their main concern to utilize any incidentally occurring opportunity to create a new teaching point for their learners:

“I didn’t think these two words would come up as a question, but when they asked the meaning and use of these words, I took my time to explain the words; I even spent extra few minutes to get them to practice these words”.

“‘Do/make research’ is a confusing phrase for my students; so when you came to class for observation; I used this opportunity to introduce you and why you were visiting: She is doing research”.

This theme relates to Bailey’s (1996) “serve the common good principle”: Teachers depart from their lesson plans because they think dealing with an individual issue would benefit the whole group.

Supporting student production

Another theme that is similar to Bailey’s (1996) “promote student’s involvement” principle is ‘supporting student production’. These experienced teachers demonstrated a student-centred approach in their lessons, making student language production a priority. These decisions involved activity that was outside the scope of the lesson plan. Such activity was reported by 6 teachers, and illustrated in the following extracts:

“I didn’t put it in the plan because any chance I get I get them to practice parts of speech”.

“I skipped ‘pros and cons’ part because it would take too long. I felt they were talking, so instead of stopping them for starting to discuss pros and cons, it was better to let them produce social speech, more natural...”

Resorting to students’ L1

One final pedagogical category relates to the teachers’ use of L1. Teachers reported two main reasons for this, to allow for humor and to facilitate learning. Their justifications are clarified in the following interview extracts:

“For ‘grocer’ I used the Turkish word because I knew this would stick to their memory better. In the past I wouldn’t do that, never use Turkish but now I do... only when it deems necessary”.

“At one point I had to resort to Turkish briefly because everything I said to make the point clear did not work. I had to make the decision”.

“Sometimes I resort to Turkish for humor purposes”, only at word level, only for the low level students”.

The analysis of the similarities between the experienced teachers in this study shows some parallelisms to the studies in the literature. First of all, the findings suggest that these ten teachers exhibit the three main characteristics of the expert teachers asserted by Tsui (2003): efficiency in making sense of and recognizing patterns in the large amounts of classroom input; selectivity in processing this huge amount of information and selecting the appropriate moves, making student learning priority; and improvisation in responding to classroom events using well-established routines. In terms of the domains of their pedagogical knowledge, they show they possess knowledge about students and what they bring into the classroom (Gatbonton, 1999), knowledge about curriculum and program (Shulman, 1987); they also possess spontaneity and flexibility (Bress, 2000).

One striking finding is the complete lack of regret they report over making spontaneous decisions, showing a confidence that in each case, the digression was the most appropriate decision. This indicates their complete awareness of the causes and consequences of their actions, which result from their vision and wider perceptions of their role (El-Dib, 2007). Probably because of all these characteristics mentioned above, these teachers seemed to have no major classroom management issues. Not only were none observed, but no mention of them was made in the interviews. They were observed to make almost entirely appropriate assumptions about their students and the lesson materials, and, although almost all failed to cover all aspects of the lesson plans, their wise use of lesson time almost certainly benefitted students.

It would not be fair to justify the success of these teachers just by talking about the pedagogical aspects of their teaching performances. Affective qualities that these teachers possessed seemed to have played a significant role in their success as expert teachers. Despite not having enough ‘tangible’ data regarding their affective attributes as for their pedagogical attributes, a summary of impressions of the affective factors based on observations and follow-up interviews is also presented.

Affective Attributes

As many would agree, there is equity of both pedagogical and affective attributes of an expert teacher. As Patten (2003) claims, good teachers are those who use their heads and hearts equally; so attitudes, emotions and interpersonal skills of teachers should also be included in any discussion on expertise in teaching. There follows a list of observed affective characteristics which teachers in this study share:

- (a) These teachers take responsibility for student learning and they are responsive to students’ needs.
- (b) Similar to the similarities found between the expert teachers in Smith and Strahan’s (2004) study, these teachers have a sense of confidence.

(c) Another similarity noted in the aforementioned study regards the rapport between teachers and students. These expert teachers maximize the importance of developing relationships with students. Positive personal interactions between teachers and students are noteworthy. The reason for this successful rapport would probably be due to their skills in ‘tuning into’ their students.

(d) ‘Persistence’ is another characteristic of expert teachers. They tend to continue explaining until a language point is fully understood. This tendency is exemplified in the following statements:

“I did not plan to spend this much time on explaining the word ‘independent’. They did not get it with one example, so I had to give more examples, and spend a lot more time than planned. I didn’t want to let this go until I saw in their faces that they got the meaning of the word. At this point I totally forgot about what I had put in my lesson plan”.

“I tried to elicit the word ‘bank’ but could not. That was something totally unpredictable. I had to spend extra time explaining the concept of ‘service-bank’, I had to make a decision, let it go or not go”.

“I am an old school teacher, I am patient, I never let things go without having been learnt properly”.

(e) Another similarity observed, which many would consider a quality to be admired, is the ability to laugh at their mistakes, helping to create a positive and non-threatening atmosphere.

One interesting comment by a student about a participating teacher immediately before an observation was “He teaches fluently”. It appears that the combination of these pedagogical and affective attributes make these teachers ‘fluent teachers’.

Tacit Knowledge

Although not a common point mentioned by the majority of the participant teachers, “tacit knowledge” is worth discussing here because this kind of knowledge appears to be an important aspect of being an expert teacher. As suggested by Schön (in Gilroy, 1993), the knowledge expert teachers possess is tacit, which means teachers are not always able to describe the knowing which their actions reveal. It is through reflection-in-action this knowledge can be recognized around repetitive experiences of practice.

Two teachers made the following comments while viewing their teaching videos in response to the question: “why did you do that although it was not in your lesson plan?”:

“Some things happen just spontaneously.. I find myself doing things automatically”

“I made up this part...I don’t exactly know why.. it just occurred to me that I could do it this way... changing the order and everything”.

Although only two instances were noted, tacit knowledge is one area that could be focused on for the purpose of exploring the concept of expertise in teaching.

Mental Lesson Plans

Two other teachers stated that when they deviated from the lesson plan, it was actually “planned in their heads”. One of these teachers noted: “Although these steps were not in my written lesson plan, they were planned in my head”.

Another case was a teacher, who had largely ignored her written lesson plan, substituting much of it with alternative procedures, which she justified by saying: “All my lesson plans are always in my head”. These two cases confirm the finding in many related studies: expert teachers plan their lessons mentally (in Tsui, 2003). The richness of these lesson plans is an intriguing area for further exploration.

“Business As Usual”

Following Peterson and Clark’s (in Bailey, 1996) identification of different pathways through a lesson, the subcategory of ‘business as usual’ is used to refer to lessons which closely follow the lesson plan. In one case in this study, the plan was followed almost exactly, with only very minor changes. This may seem surprising in the context of this study, and the previous discussion of repertoires. A single case is not sufficient to draw conclusions about a link between expertise and this subcategory, although it seems an interesting area for further research.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While there is a common consideration that expert knowledge is mostly tacit and non-reflective (Tsui, 2009), therefore, there is a lack of attention to the knowledge of expert teachers (Tsui, 2003); this study was an attempt to show that we can have access to their internal mental processes, by creating an environment for them to critically reflect on their actions in the classroom. As pointed out by Senior (2002) “experienced language teachers are not behaving in a haphazard way; rather, their classroom behaviour is governed by an intuitive understanding of certain key principles” (p.402). Therefore, successful reflection can be stimulated by supplying the modelling, scaffolding and coaching (Gill & Halim, 2007).

The findings of this study suggest that our understanding of expertise can be extended by examining the pedagogical and affective attributes of successful experienced teachers. It is shown in this study that teachers may become more reflective when they are encouraged to engage in personal theorizing through their own critical reflections (Lee, 2001) and given the opportunity to view classroom events in an objective manner through emotional detachment, and to identify factors influencing their practice (Leng, 2007).

Another outcome of this study is the identification of an internal consistency between expert teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and the decisions they take, as also asserted by Smith (1996). In other words, if a teacher believes that reviewing and consolidating the previously covered points is important for fostering their students’ learning, for example, it is reflected in their decisions during interactive teaching. Similarly, believing in establishing good rapport with students would eliminate classroom management issues resulting in positive learning environment in these teachers’ classes.

These exemplary teachers' well-developed schemata for classroom events presents itself as an invaluable source for teachers at all levels, and studies of this kind have the potential to benefit all stake-holders in education by promoting the understanding and dissemination of expertise. As noted by Berliner (in Richards and Nunan, 1990), these studies aid the developing teachers' path toward becoming an expert; and along the path, the expert teachers can be assigned to take on a mentoring role, and share the wealth of experience they have accumulated to assist the progress of colleagues towards expertise. Needless to say, there should be a standardised training for these mentors including guidelines and workshops on the development of mentees' ability to reflect on classroom practice (Leng, 2007), a skill which has important implications for the teacher education programs.

Another implication from the present study concerns the use of teaching videos and/or the transcripts both at in-service and pre-service teacher education programs. As Johnson (in Bailey, 1996) points out, "utilizing stimulus recall data from experienced ESL teachers may be one way of providing opportunities for pre-service ESL teachers to trace the instructional decisions of experienced ESL teachers" (p.37). In short, videos of this kind might provide teachers a rich resource to help them understand their own practice, and also increase their professionalism by taking inspiration from expert teachers in their environment.

In conclusion, as the area of exploring expert teacher behaviour is extremely complex, a much greater focus on this area is needed. Each study on this topic is expected to uncover a new layer, therefore, the determination of researchers to explore the off the beaten avenues of teacher expertise will help to unlock its secrets for the benefit of all.

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Turkish Abstract**Deneyimli Öğretmenlerin Etkileşimli Kararlarını Anlamak: Öğretimde Uzmanlıkla İlgili Yorumlar**

Öğretmenler ve öğretim ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda öğretmenlerin verdiği kararlar hep merak edilen bir konu olmuştur. Öğretmenlerin karar mekanizmalarını anlamaya yönelik bir yaklaşım da onların ders sırasında yaptıkları yansıtma kararlarının dikkatlice incelenmesidir. Deneyimli öğretmenlerin sınıf içi performanslarının incelenmesi ile çok şey öğrenilebileceği inancına dayanan bu çalışma, on deneyimli dil öğretmenin sınıf içi etkileşimli kararlarını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu on öğretmenin dersleri videoya kaydedilmiş, daha sonra kendileri ile sözlü görüşmeler yapılarak ders sırasında verdikleri kararların arkasındaki nedenler sorulmuş ve bu nedenlerin benzer yönleri belirlenerek sınıflandırılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, katılan öğretmenlerin pedagojik ve duygusal boyutlarda benzerlikler gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu sonuçlar, deneyimli öğretmenlerin karar verme süreçlerinin anlaşılması açısından hem hizmet öncesi, hem de hizmet içi öğretmen eğitimlerinde faydalı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deneyimli Öğretmenler, Etkileşimli Karar Verme, Ders içi Yansıtma, Uzmanlık, Öğretmen Eğitimi

French Abstract**Donner un Sens aux Décisions Interactives des Enseignants Expérimentés: les Implications pour l'Expertise dans l'Enseignement**

La Prise de Décision des enseignants est toujours un domaine de la curiosité dans de nombreuses études liées aux enseignants et à l'enseignement. Une approche à la compréhension des décisions des professeurs est par l'analyse de leurs comportements de réflexion sur action. Cette étude, basée sur la prémisse que l'on puisse gagner la compréhension d'examiner les performances de salle de classe des enseignants expérimentés, se concentre sur les décisions interactives faites par dix professeurs de langue expérimentés. L'étude présente les découvertes d'un analyse de ressemblances dans les motivations derrière les décisions interactives des professeurs, comme démontré dans leur rapports verbaux après la vidéo des observations de cours enregistrées. Ces découvertes montrent qu'il y a les deux partagé des attributs pédagogiques et affectifs parmi des professeurs de participant. Ces résultats et la perspicacité qu'ils donnent dans la prise de décisions des professeurs expérimentés sont potentiellement avantageux pour tout le pré service et des professeurs pratiquants.

Mots Clés: Professeurs Expérimentés; Prise de Décisions Interactive; Réflexion-sur-action; Expertise; Education d'enseignant

Arabic Abstract

إستيعاب القرارات الفعالة للمعلمين ذوي الخبرة: تطبيق الخبرة في التعليم

رأي المعلمين كان له الأفضلية دائماً بالدراسات المتعلقة بالتعليم و المعلمين أحدى النظريات لفهم قرارات المعلمين هو تحليل أنعكاس سلوكياتهم العلمية . تعتمد هذه الدراسة على فحص خبرات المعلمين و إنجازاتهم الصعبة والتركيز على الوزارات الفعالة معتمدين على خبرة معلمين اللغة أظهرت النتائج تحليل التشابهات بالرافعية خلف أو وراء مشاغل قرارات المعلمين حسب تقاريرهم ومن خلال تسجيل الفيديو للدروس و الملاحظات الصفية شارك بذلك كل مدرس .