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THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN TRAINING FUTURE EFL TEACHERS

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The article describes the application of feedback in the training of future English teachers and examines how contextual influences of their school practice shape the University practices. The study used curriculum analysis and inductive and deductive analyses of observation during the students' school practice. It studied the case of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University in piloting a new Methodology curriculum designed by a group of experts within the New Generation School Teacher Project (British Council Ukraine and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2013–2019). The core Curriculum analysis unpacks a curriculum into its parts, dealing with feedback in terms of learning, teaching, and resources; evaluates how the parts fit together, checks underlying beliefs and assumptions; and seeks justification for curriculum choices and assumptions.

The research population was 25 students of the foreign Languages Department who were on the 3rd year of studying the Methodology course by the pilot Methodology curriculum, and they had their 6-weeks' school practice as observed teachers. The authors conclude that future teachers in their pre-service training are exposed to and use a complex set of feedback practices in both written and spoken modes. However, a deeper analysis reveals that they mainly use the transmission approach, which underestimates learner autonomy and students' self-assessment; they mainly use feedback that addresses processes of tasks and minor amounts of self-regulation feedback.

Key words: feedback, pre-service English teacher training, transmission approach to feedback, self-regulation feedback.

У статті описано застосування зворотного зв'язку у навчанні майбутніх учителів англійської мови та досліджено, як контекстуальний вплив їхньої шкільної практики впливає на вивчення курсу методики навчання англійської мови в університеті. У дослідженні використано аналіз навчальної програми, а також індуктивний та дедуктивний аналіз спостереження під час шкільної практики студентів. Досліджено кейс Уманського державного педагогічного університету імені Павла Тичини при пілотуванні інноваційної навчальної програми з методики, розробленої групою експертів у рамках проекту «Шкільний учитель нового покоління» (Британська Рада в Україні та Міністерство освіти і науки України, 2013–2019). Унаслідок аналізу навчальної програми виокремлено її складові частини, що стосуються зворотного зв'язку з точки зору навчання, викладання та ресурсів; оцінено, як частини поєднуються між собою, перевірено основні переконання та припущення зроблено обґрунтування їхнього вибору.

У дослідженні взяли участь 25 студентів факультету іноземних мов, які третій рік вивчали курс методики навчання іноземних мов і проходили 6-тижневу шкільну практику в якості вчителів. Автори роблять висновок, що майбутні вчителі під час підготовки до практичної діяльності використовують складний набір методів зворотного зв'язку як у письмовому, так і в усному режимі. Однак більш глибокий аналіз показує, що вони в основному використовують підхід передачі, який певною мірою занижує автономію учня та самооцінку учнів, тобто вони переважно використовують трансмісійний зворотний зв'язок, який стосується процесів виконання завдань, і передбачає незначний обсяг саморегулювання.

Ключові слова: зворотній зв'язок, підготовка вчителів англійської мови, трансмісійний підхід до зворотного зв'язку, саморегулювання.

Introduction. Feedback is considered an essential improvement tool in teaching and learning. In the last three decades, the concept has been studied in theoretical works that demonstrate how feedback supports learning. However, in the last decade, the discussion has moved from a theoretical view of feedback to demonstrating how feedback practices are applied in particular contexts (Smith & Lipnevich, 2018; Esterhazy, 2018; Sadler, 2010). This study describes the application of feedback in the training of future English teachers and examines how contextual influences of their school practice shape the University practices.

Literature review. Numerous works have been devoted to transmission models of feedback and its theoretical conceptualisations (e.g. Sadler, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). The authors presented feedback as a process of providing information on performance or understanding. However, some recent conceptions give a broader perspective based on attaching a greater importance to the use of students' self-evaluation and peer feedback and to encourage the learner autonomy and self-

regulation (Winstone & Carless, 2019). Therefore, some prior research linked formative assessment, students' autonomous learning, and feedback (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). Moreover, the most recent research trend is how to apply online tools to give and receive feedback to improve learning (Dávila, Romani & Hernandez, 2020) and teaching (Kassim et al., 2017). The teacher-learner synergy contributes to better learning as improvements based on students' feedback help teachers better manage the learning process and achieve learning outcomes (Takriff et al., 2011; Ikhsan, 2019).

As a result, the new strategies that consider the learners' active construction of meaning central to feedback can enhance learning. However, little is known about how Ukrainian pre-service teachers learn to use feedback practices when they start teaching, and it is not clear what way feedback is included in their Methodology curriculum. The article seeks to investigate these issues.

Methods. The study used curriculum analysis and inductive and deductive analyses of observation during the students' school practice. It studies the case of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University in piloting a new Methodology curriculum designed by a group of experts within the New Generation School Teacher Project (British Council Ukraine and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2013–2019). The core Curriculum analysis unpacks a curriculum into its parts dealing with feedback in terms of learning, teaching, and resources); evaluates how the parts fit together, checks underlying beliefs and assumptions; and seeks justification for curriculum choices and assumptions (Jansen & Reddy, n.d., 2).

Participants. The research population is 25 students of the foreign Languages Department of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. The students mentioned above were on the 3rd year of studying the Methodology course by the pilot Methodology curriculum, and they had their 6-weeks' school practice as observed teachers. As the Core Curriculum describes, "Observed teaching in semester 8 puts students into the role of teacher under the supervision of school-based mentors and university tutors. Students spend six weeks full-time in schools. Students have weekly meetings with tutors during the observed teaching to discuss and reflect on their experience" (School experience, p. 1).

For the data collection, the authors used observation sheets with the focus on feedback tools used by the students during their observed teaching.

Research Questions:

What parts of the curriculum deal with giving and receiving feedback?

What types of feedback does the Curriculum focus on?

What feedback do the students deal with during their observed teaching?

Table 1

Addressing feedback in the Methodology Curriculum

Chapter	Subchapter	Feedback context
The Profile of a Newly-Qualified English Teacher	Planning lessons and courses	Plan the timing of a lesson in an organised way, allowing time for monitoring and feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 20)
	Managing the lesson	• Provide appropriate feedback to learners. • Solicit and act on feedback from learners (Core Curriculum, p. 20)
	Evaluating and assessing learning	• Use a range of techniques to correct errors in learners' spoken and written language and provide developmental feedback. • Administer, mark and give feedback on tests and assessment in a timely and appropriate fashion and maintain accurate assessment records (Core Curriculum, p. 21)
Preparing to Teach 1	Sample assessment specifications	vocabulary/grammar activities you tried out and the feedback you received from your peers (Core Curriculum, p. 39)
Classroom Management	Indicative content	Giving and receiving formal and informal feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 31)
Preparing to Teach 2	Sample Assessment Specifications	Make copies of the text and your handout and try the material out with your chosen school class. Take feedback from your co-operating teacher and your learners. Try the material out with your chosen class. Take brief written feedback from your learners. (Core Curriculum, p. 51)
Language Skills – Teaching Listening	Objectives	assess learners' listening skills and give feedback to learners on their achievements (Core Curriculum, p. 53)
	Indicative content	Ways of assessing learners' listening skills and giving feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 53)
Language Skills – Teaching Speaking	Objectives	assess learners' speaking skills and give feedback to learners on their achievements (Core Curriculum, p.55)
	Indicative content	Ways of assessing and giving feedback on learners' speaking (Core Curriculum, p. 55)
Language Skills – Teaching Reading	Objectives	assess learners' reading skills and give feedback to learners on their achievements (Core Curriculum, p. 57)
	Indicative content	Ways of assessing learners' reading skills and giving feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 57)
Error Analysis and Dealing with Errors	Indicative content	Brief overview of common ways of giving and receiving feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 68)

Continuation of table 1

General glossary	Feedback	Information that is given to learners by their teacher on their spoken or written performance. It can also refer to learners reporting back to the class on what they have been researching or discussing. (Core Curriculum, p. 96)
	Formative assessment/ evaluation	Ongoing assessment in which the teacher gives students feedback on their progress during a course, rather than at the end of it so that they can learn from the feedback (Core Curriculum, p. 97)
	Peer review	Learners' feedback on each other's writing (Core Curriculum, p. 101)
School experience	Teacher assistantship	arrange for your students' lessons to be observed and ensure that the school-based mentor understands the importance of supportive and non-judgemental feedback. (Core Curriculum, p. 118)
	Procedures for teacher assistantship	Mentors will then observe the student teaching and will give feedback afterwards. This is a challenging moment for a student, and it's important for mentors to show empathy, be aware of the student's sensitivity, and make the feedback developmental and supportive, avoiding negative judgment. (Core Curriculum, p. 118)
	Observed teaching	Reflective writing (300-450 words) on a lesson (student's choice) incorporating feedback from a peer, a mentor or a supervisor. Appropriate feedback to learners is provided and feedback from learners is taken into account. (Core Curriculum, p. 122)

The table demonstrates the parts of the Methodology curriculum dealing with giving and receiving feedback in the course. The Profile of a Newly-Qualified English Teacher describes the novice teacher as able to use feedback in planning lessons and courses, managing lessons, and evaluating and assessing learning. The authors classify feedback as "appropriate", "timely" and "developmental". In the Preparing to teach sections, the authors include feedback in the portfolio tasks and address it in sample assessment specifications. Feedback appears in both objectives and indicative content in the Classroom Management, Skills and Error Analysis sections. In the glossary, the definition of feedback sounds like this, "Information that is given to learners by their teacher on their spoken or written performance. It can also refer to learners reporting back to the class on what they have been researching or discussing" (Core Curriculum, p. 96).

The key actors that are involved in helping the pre-service students to incorporate feedback in their teaching are: the Methodology teacher, the school-based mentor, the University tutor, University students (peers) and school students. The Methodology teacher is a University-based academic staff member who delivers the students the Methodology course; different teachers may be in different semesters. The school-

based mentor is an experienced teacher who conducts English lessons at a partner school and, during the student's school experience, delegates some teaching responsibilities to the student. Depending on the school experience type (guided observation, teacher assistantship or observed teaching), the mentee student may have different responsibilities. The mentor provides support and gives developmental feedback to the student. The University tutor is a University-based academic staff member who supervises and observes the student during the school experience. Partnership between the three actors is essential for future teachers' ability to five and receive appropriate feedback when they start teaching.

Feedback in pre-service English teacher training can be provided in different formats: University Methodology teacher-University student (during University-based training), school mentor-student (during school experience as a teacher assistant or observed teacher), University teacher (school experience supervisor)-University student (during school experience as a teacher assistant or observed teacher), University student-University student, University student-school student, school-student-school student. All these formats can also work in a opposite direction and their choice depends on the learning contexts and their purpose. They can be verbal, non-verbal, formal, informal and written. The students' observation during their observed teaching gives the idea of which formats they apply in their school experience (see table 2).

Table 2

Feedback formats used by students during their observed teaching

		Feedback givers				
		University student	Methodology teacher	University tutor	School mentor	School student
Feedback receivers	University student					
	Methodology teacher					
	University tutor					
	School mentor					
	School student					

The table demonstrates that in Pre-service Methodology training and their school experience, University students are used to receiving feedback from different people, namely their peers (in both – University- and school-based training), Methodology teachers (in University-based training), University tutor, school mentor and school students (in school-based training). As to giving feedback, they mainly direct it to school students and organise peer feedback school students provide to each other.

Discussion. From the short Curriculum analysis above, key findings emerge: firstly, the newly qualified teacher profile contains information about different feedback-related skills they are to possess; secondly, in different Curriculum sections, the authors address different types of feedback without devoting a separate section to

it; thirdly, the glossary gives the definition of feedback as "information that is given to learners by their teacher …or … learners reporting back to the class". The definition ties well with earlier studies in which the authors presented more a transmission view feedback as a process of providing information on performance or understanding (Sadler, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). It does not take into account a broader perspective based on the learner autonomy and self-regulation (Winstone & Carless, 2019). So, it seems to us that it is important to revisit the curriculum definition. As a matter of fact, the materials designed for Methodology course based on the curriculum should deepen the understanding of feedback as a notion as well as focus on its potential in helping pre-service teachers to construct meaning which might help them improve their teaching. The classroom observation demonstrates that the future teachers' understanding of feedback is closer to eliciting students' answers to the questions that may lead to formal or informal assessment. Or, for instance, getting positive/negative/constructive lesson analysis from a school mentor or a University teacher. Thus, being exposed to different types of feedback in their Methodology course and school experience, the observed teachers do not tend to possess the skills to give and elicit feedback that should enhance learning. It is implicit in the Methodology Curriculum that feedback should not be regarded as a one-way flow of information from teacher to student and/or back. Feedback should not be regarded only as an element of assessment but should be connected with reflection and self-reflection. So, it is up to the Methodology teachers to design materials and plan classroom procedures in which constructive feedback is a usual thing to practice with a rich spectrum of tools and methods.

Conclusions. The study contributes to knowledge about pre-service English teachers'feedback practices. It adds to empirical knowledge of feedback practices in Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, which makes a valuable context as it has been piloting the innovative Methodology Core Curriculum for 5 years. The study shows that future teachers in their pre-service training are exposed and use a complex set of feedback practices in both written and spoken modes. However, a deeper analysis reveals that they mainly use transmission approach which to some extent underestimates learner autonomy and students' self-assessment, that is they mainly use feedback that addresses processes of tasks, and minor amounts of self-regulation feedback.

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