

Criticism Strategy

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CRITICISM STRATEGIES USED BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN GIVING PEER-FEEDBACK IN MICROTEACHING CLASS

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Abstract

This study aims at describing types of criticism strategy employed by student-teachers in giving feedback on teaching performance in Microteaching class. The utterances of student-observers when giving feedback to the student-teachers were recorded. Then, the utterances were analyzed to find out the types of criticism strategy employed by the student-observers by applying Miles and Hubberman theory. The results show that the student-observers exploited three strategies for direct criticism, namely (1) statement of the problem, (2) statement of difficulty and (3) consequences; whereas for indirect criticism, they also used three strategies, i.e. (1) demand for change, (2) suggestion for change and (3) correction.

Keywords: *criticism strategy, pre-service teacher, peer-feedback, microteaching class*

1. INTRODUCTION

Microteaching is regarded as an effective teaching technique (Skakunova, 2017) or laboratory-based teacher training method (Orlich, harder, Callahan, Trevisa, & Brown, 2010), or teaching situation (Cooper & Allen, 1971) which has certain characteristics, namely: (a) scaled down in term of time (four to twenty minutes) and numbers of students (three to ten peers or fellow student-teachers), (b) a short content, (c) focus on selected aspect of teaching, (d) include teaching a lesson and immediate feedback which may come from video or audiotape recording, supervisor, pupils, collegous, or from the teacher's self-perception (Orlich, *et al.*, 2010; Cooper & Allen, 1971) and it is improved through time (Wilson & l'Anson, 2006). Microteaching is very beneficial for pre-service teachers because of two reasons—easiness to do and its consistency to control acquired teaching skills among novice teachers (Skakunova, 2017).

Essential components of Microteaching are video-taped lesson and feedback from peers and from teacher trainer (Skakunova, 2017). Feedback is a major element in the pre-service teachers training process. It should be given by considering immediacy and objectivity principles. In order to be objective, the feedback must be based on the skills, strategies, techniques, teaching aids, and so on (Şen, 2010). Feedback has been lauded as a key pedagogical tool in higher education (Zher, Hussein & Saat, 2016). Moreover, feedback which refers to information concerning one's performance with instruction to help close incompetency gap between current and targetted competency level is a powerful constructivist tool to enrich deep learning and a critical component of assessment for learning (Rahmat,

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2013). Feedback can be defined as opinion or judgment bestowed by an agent (like a teacher) pertaining parts of one's performance or comprehension (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In assessment process, feedback can be given by a teacher to students or student to another student. The latter is called peer feedback. Peer feedback can be defined as a communication process through which learners into dialogue related to performance and standard without formal grades (Liu & Carless, 2006). In general, peer feedback provides several benefits not only for students who receive the feedback but also for those who give the feedback. First, it enables students to take an active role in the management of their own learning. Second, it enables students to better self assess themselves. Third, it enhances students learning. Through peer feedback students are actively engaged in articulating evolving understandings of subject matter and carries potential for improved performance in high-stake assessment. Fourth, peer feedback can give more feedback more quickly than feedback from teacher. Fifth, through peer feedback, students can develop skills such as critical reflection, listening to and acting on feedback, sensitively assessing and providing feedback on the work of others. Finally, students can learn not only from the peer feedback itself, but through meta-processes such as reflecting on and justifying what they have done (Liu & Carless, 2006).

Experts propose different categories of feedback. Feedback can be grouped into implicit or explicit (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). When there is no overt indicators on indicating students' errors is called as implicit feedback; whereas, in the explicit feedback, there is. Implicit feedback often take the form of recast, while explicit feedback utilizes explicit correction and metacognitive feedback. Moreover, feedback can be positive or negative. Positive feedback inform learner that the current choice is accurate, while negative feedback informs the learner that the alternative choice is correct (Ellis, 2009). Positive feedback functions as affirming; whereas negative feedback runs as disapproving (Han, 2002). The negative feedback is realized in the form of critical evaluation and is known as criticism.

Giving critical feedback is an important communicative task in university context (Nguyen, 2008). Criticizing refers to act of 'finding fault' which involves giving 'a negative evaluation of a person or an act for which he or she is deemed responsible (Tracy & Eisenberg, 2009). In addition, Nguyen (2008) delineates that criticizing refers to an illocutionary act whose illocutionary goal is to provide negative judgment to hearer's (H) actions, choice, words and products for which he or she may be held responsible. In line with this, Tracy & Eisenberg (2009) classifies criticism into good and bad criticism. Good criticism has three characteristics, such as (1) using positive language and behavior, (2) giving specific, accurate and realistic suggested idea, and (3) do not damage the relationship between speaker (S) and hearer (H).

This present study used the theory of criticism strategy proposed by Nguyen (2008) who claims that criticism can be realized by direct and indirect strategies as well. This classification are determined based on two considerations, namely (1) the degree of illocutionary clearness and (2) the number of attempts needed to get the meaning of criticism. Direct criticism includes six strategies, such as (1) negative evaluation, (2) disapproval, (3) expression of disagreement, (4) statement of problem, (5) statement of difficulty, and (6) consequences. Indirect criticism comprises nine strategies, namely (1) correction, (2) indicating standard, (3) demand for change, (4) request for change, (5) advice about change, (6) suggestion for change, (7) expression of uncertainty, (8) asking/presupposing and (9) other hints (Nguyen, 2008). It can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. Taxonomy of Criticism adopted from Nguyen (2008)

Type	Characteristics
1. Direct Criticism	Explicitly pointing out the problem with H's choice/actions/work/product, etc.

	1	
a. Negative evaluation		Usually expressed via evaluative adjectives with negative meaning or evaluative adjective with positive meaning plus negation
b. Disapproval		Describing S's attitude towards H's choice, etc.
c. Expression of disagreement		Usually realized by means of negation word "No" or performatives 'I don't agree' or "I disagree" (with or without modal) or via arguments against H
d. Statement of the problem		Stating errors or problems found with H's choice, etc.
e. Statement of difficulty		Usually expressed by means of such structures as "I find it difficult to understand...", "It's difficult to understand..."
f. Consequences		Warning about negative consequences or negative effects of H's choice, etc. for H himself or herself or for the public
2. Indirect Criticism		Implying the problems with H's choice/actions/work/product, etc. by correcting H indicating rules and standard, giving advice, suggesting or even requesting and demanding changes to H's work/choice, and by means of different kinds of hints to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness of H's choice.
a. Correction		Including all utterances which have the purpose of fixing errors by asserting specific alternatives to H's choice, etc.
b. Indicating Standard		Usually stated as a collective obligation rather than an obligation for H personally or as a rule which S thinks is commonly agreed upon and applied to all
c. Demand for change		Usually expressed via such structures as "You have to", "You must", "It is obligatory that", "You are required" or "You need", "It is necessary"
d. Request for change		Usually expressed via such structures as "Will you...?", "Can you...?", "Would you...?", or imperatives (with or without politeness markers), or want statement
e. Advice for change		Usually expressed via the performative "I advise you...", or structures with "should" with or without modality.
f. Suggestion for change		Usually expressed via performative "I suggest that..." or such structure as "You can", "You could", "It would be better if" or "Why don't you", etc.
g. Expression of uncertainty		Utterances expressing S's uncertainty to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness of H's choice, etc.
h. Asking/presupposing		Rhetorical questions to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness of H's choice, etc.
i. Other hints		Including other kinds of hints that did not belong to (h) and (i). May include sarcasm

There were several obligatory stages of classroom activities applied in Microteaching class. First was preparation stage. In this phase, the students were asked to prepare a micro lesson plan constructed based on current-practice curriculum for Indonesian secondary school levels. Second was teaching performance stage. In every teaching performance, the students took a part as different role. One student acted as student-teacher. Six students played role as students and other two students performed as student-observers. These roles have been changed in turn for each teaching performance. Next, student-teachers practiced teaching skills and implemented lesson plan in teaching performance in the classroom for approximately 15-20 minutes. Third was feedback phase. In this phase, student-observers gave feedback to student-teacher's lesson plan and teaching performance. Finally, lecturer gave feedback to student-teacher to strengthen student's potency and to improve the weaknesses appeared lesson plan and in the teaching performance. Last, post-performance phase. In this phase, the students were asked to revise the lesson plan and improve their

teaching performance based on feedback given by their student-observers and lecturer-trainer. This study seeks to answer the following research question “What are types of criticism strategy used by student-observers in giving feedback in Microteaching class?”

2. METHODS

This study was descriptive qualitative research. The study was conducted at English Education Study Program IAIN Batusangkar in 2016/2017 academic year. The participants of the study were a numbers of fellow student-teachers (9 students) who enrolled Microteaching subject. The use of this group of Microteaching class because the classroom activities required students to give feedback to their peers’ teaching performance. To collect the data, the researcher recorded student-observers utterances when giving feedback to student-teachers’ teaching performance for six meetings. The utterances then were transcribed and analyzed. Technique of data analysis used in this study was qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles and Hubberman. This technique was classified into three phases—data reduction, data display and data verification and conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study shows that the students employed both direct and indirect strategies when criticizing peer-teaching performance. Direct strategy means the speaker is explicitly pointing out errors or problems occurred in the student-teachers’ teaching performance. For the direct strategy, it was found that the students employed three kinds of strategies, namely (1) statement of the problem, (2) statement of difficulty and (3) consequences.

First, the strategy of statement of the problem in criticizing occurs when the students clearly stated the errors or problems found with the hearer’s choice or performance. For example:

- (1) *I think the audio is not too clear for the students (SO.3/S.5)*
- (2) *You did not give appropriate reinforcement when one of your student gave wrong answer (SO.1/S.6)*

The excerpt (1) occurred when student-observer gave negative judgment to the student-teacher’s teaching performance when she played unclear audio. The excerpt (2) shows that the student-observer gave negative feedback to student-teacher’s teaching performance when he did not pay attention to student who gave wrong answer. These two excerpts are categorized into the strategy of statement of the problem because the student-observers stated explicitly and clearly their negative evaluation toward errors made the student-teachers.

Second, the strategy of statement of difficulty is characterized by using the structure such as “*It’s difficult to understand ...*” or “*I find it difficult to understand....*” For instance:

- (3) *OK...well, for giving motivation and BKOF session you applied..., it’s difficultfor me to understand ... (SO.7/S.4)*
- (4) *In the opening session, actually I don’t understand the purpose of the video. I think your students were confused because you showed it just a little bit part only (SO.1/S.2)*

The excerpt (3) illustrates that the student-observer shared her observation result about errors made by the student-teacher when she applied giving motivation and BKOF stage at the beginning of the lesson. The student-observer was confused with what the student-teacher did. This indicated that the student-observer gave negative judgment to the student-teacher’s teaching performance. The excerpt (4) shows that the student-observer testified negative

evaluation to the student-teacher when she thought that video used at the beginning of the lesson was useless because it was played very shortly. So, it was hard for the students to catch the meaning from the video. These two excerpts are grouped into the strategy of statement of difficulty because the student-observers used structure like *It's difficult for me to understand...* and *I don't understand...* to state the errors or problems made by the student-teachers.

Third, the strategy of consequence means that the speaker gives warning of negative effects or consequences of Hearer's choice. For example:

- (5) *The instruction given to the student was not clear, so the students were asking their friends... (SO.5/S.2)*
- (6) *When reviewing the last lesson, you didn't point the student who will answer your questions, that's way the students answered your questions altogether and the class became crowded. (SO.1/S.2)*

The excerpt (5) demonstrates that the student-observer gave negative assessment to the instruction given by student-teacher to her students because the instruction was not transparent. The student-observer also stated its consequences. The excerpt (6) illustrates that the student-observers criticized the student-teacher when he did not point out a student to answer the question then followed with its effect. These two examples shows that the student-observer stated frankly the errors made by student-teachers, then followed by the effect of the error as its consequences. Thus, these excerpts can be categorized as the strategy of consequences.

Indirect criticism strategy refers to implying the problem or errors with the student-teachers' teaching performance by correcting them implicitly. For indirect criticism, the students used three strategies, namely: (1) correction, (2) demand for change, and (3) suggestion for change.

First, the strategy of correction denotes all utterances which have the purpose of fixing errors by asserting specific alternatives to Hearer's choice. For instance:

- (7) *The game you played with the students you name with guessing game, I think it is guessing word (SO.2/S.5)*
- (8) *When grouping the students, you were wrong to name the format of seat, you said triple, but I think it is triangle(SO.1/S.2)*

The excerpts (7) and (8) show that the student-observer stated student-teacher's error indirectly when he wrongly named the game and seat format used in the learning process and the student-observer gave alternative name to label the game and the seat format more appropriately as alternative names. These two excerpts indicate that the student-observer did not only state the error but also the alternative choice to change the error. Consequently, these two excerpts belong to the strategy of correction.

Second, the strategy demand for change² can be defined as negative evaluation which is usually expressed with the structure of "you have to", "you must", "it is obligatory that" or "you are required to" or "you need" or "it is necessary". For example:

- (9) *At the beginning of the lesson, you have to play the videot to motivate the students (SO.2/S.4)*
- (10) *To build students' curiosity, you need to ask the students to ask questions in detail, not in general (SO.5/S.1)*

The excerpt (9) indicates that the student-observer conveyed negative judgment to student-teacher's error because she missed essential activity that it should have been done at the beginning of the lesson. The excerpt (10) demonstrates that student-observer thought that the questions used by student-teacher were too general so the students just kept silent. So, the students were less curious in learning. The student-observer notified his demand to change the error. These two examples were included as the strategy demand for change. This strategy is characterized with the structure of "You have to" and "You need to".

Third, the strategy of suggestion for change refers to any expressions which are usually expressed via performative like "I suggest that..." or structure as "you can", "you could" or "It would be better if..." to "Why don't you", etc. For example:

- (11) *It is better for you to ask the students to bring dictionary to the classroom for the next meeting*(SO.8/S.5)
- (12) *It could be better if the teacher ask to other students to retell their friends unforgettable experience* (SO.6/S.2)
- (13) *I suggest you to show conversation of the people about personal identity*(SO.8/S.3)

The excerpts (11) - (13) show that the student-observers stated the error made by student-teacher indirectly by conveying suggestion to change the error into the more precise activity. This strategy was characterized by using performative like "I suggest you to..." and the structure, like "It is better for you" and "It could be better...."

2 CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis, it was found that the students applied three strategies in conveying direct criticism, that is (1) the statement of problem, (2) statement of difficulty and (3) consequences. For, indirect criticism, the students employed three strategies, namely (1) correction, (2) demand for change and (3) suggestion for change.

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