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TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The role of consciousness-raising through critical reflection in teachers' professional development: A sociocultural perspective

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Abstract: This study, framed within Vygotskyan sociocultural approaches to teacher education, aimed at reconceptualizing the thinking and subsequent recontextualizing of the classroom practice of a participating teacher. An Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher with pseudonym -Sara- was the participant of the study. Sara's conceptions of teaching and classroom behavior were changed through awareness-raising of and critical reflection on her teaching behavior. This was done through replacing her everyday concepts by conducting three workshops and reflection on her follow-up classroom behavior videotaped by Sara herself. The results of the study showed that the participating teacher, over a process of struggle with her past experiences, gradually replaced her old classroom practice. The findings can be illuminating for policy-makers and material developers who are striving for finding a solution to classroom complex dilemmas. It can also be rewarding for teacher educators and teachers trying to change the classroom practice of in-service teachers.

1. Introduction

English teachers, when entering the profession of second language teaching, have subconsciously developed their cognitive conception of how to teach in English classes. This could have been

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The present study showed that the holding seminars, workshops, and conferences do not help to practical development of pre-service and in-service teachers. For many years, an enormous number of presentations, seminars, and conferences have been held on how best to improve teachers' classroom practice but none of them has been as useful as the method introduced in the present study. The study suggests that the best way to develop teachers in their classroom interaction is to improve their thinking on positive classroom interaction by videotaping their classroom behavior, reviewing the videotaped classroom behaviors, and reflecting on the teachers' videotaped classroom practice.

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ingrained and nurtured by their long experience as learners in the classroom contexts where they have been apprenticeship of observation. Furthermore, much of the history of English language teaching (ELT) has put under the spotlight the disciplinary knowledge we have persistently drawn on as content knowledge (what L2 teachers need to know) and learning-teaching process (how the content knowledge is best learned). Known as Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and systemic linguistics in the field, such content-process dichotomy has not thus far regarded teachers as learners of teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

Also, influenced contextually by different perspectives and orientations of micro-and macro-structures of the local context where they teach, language teachers constantly experience challenges both cognitively and practically. Conflicting views have continued to exist both within and across Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) programs. This in turn has resulted in different perceptions of what teachers know, what they need to know, and how to develop that knowledge, which have possibly originated from two contrasting epistemologies: positivistic and sociocultural.

The positivistic epistemological perspective has resulted in cognitive learning theories which define learning as an internal psychological process isolated in the mind of the learner and largely free from the social and physical contexts within which it occurs (Lenneberg, 1967). This epistemology holds the belief that reality exists apart from the knower and can be captured through careful, systematic processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Grimmett, 2014; Johnson, 2009). Originating from such beliefs, teacher education programs have commonly been in the form of workshops, seminars, and scholarly presentations which do not seem to have been very effective in bringing about the required results (Grimmett, 2014; Johnson, 2009). Furthermore, it has been argued that the disciplinary knowledge that defines what language is, how it works, and how it is acquired, which has emerged out of the fields of theoretical linguistics and SLA, is not the same knowledge that teachers need to teach L2, nor is it the same knowledge that students need in order to learn a L2 (Freeman, 2004; Johnson, 2006, 2009). This perspective, however, despite opposing views of its critics, has had the greatest impact on teaching and teacher education during the half past century (Shulman, 1986).

In stark contrast with positivistic perspectives to teacher education, social constructionist perspectives such as Piaget's (1955) genetic epistemology, Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory, Bruner's (1960) learning theory, Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory, and Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning all posit that social interaction and contextual involvement are central to learning. Relating them to the field of teacher education, the scholars who have supported such theories (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Seedhouse, 2004; Van Lier, 2001; Walsh, 2002, 2006, 2011) have resisted positivist epistemologies, and the use of scientific methods to research in education in general and teacher education in particular due to the following reasons. First, a one-size-fits-all philosophy has not led to good results due to complexities of the classroom events (Johnson, 2009). Second, research findings conducted in a positivistic paradigm are oversimplified, depersonalized, and decontextualized (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Third, as the proponents of sociocultural perspectives on teacher education argue, the complexities of classroom life cannot be well—investigated in neat, clinical experimental designs. As a consequence, any generalizations which emerge out of such research disciplines tend to disregard the complex social, historical, cultural, economic, and political dimensions that permeate schools and schooling in the broader social milieu (Seedhouse, 2004; Shulman, 1986; Walsh, 2011).

The sociocultural epistemology to teacher education, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of human agency in the developmental process, positing that learning is not the straightforward transmission of skills or knowledge from the outside, but is the gradual movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by the educated individuals (Johnson, 2009; Kozulin, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Salomon, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). For this gradual movement to occur, the present everyday thinking of teachers must be gradually replaced with related teaching concepts that have been scientifically researched (Grimmett, 2014; Johnson & Golombek,

2011; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987) through dialogic mediation and peripheral participation of the teachers themselves (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This reconceptualization in turn results in recontextualizing the professional practice of teachers which consequently results in change in the participatory structure of the English classes. For effective replacing of everyday concepts with scientifically researched ones, raising awareness of the teachers regarding their present thinking and behavior and follow-up persistent critical reflection on their emerging practices seems to be the most effective practices (Walsh, 2011).

It is clear that professional development of the teachers relates to their classroom interaction. Yet, despite the importance of scientifically researched concepts as mediating factors in service of classroom interaction, until recently, little has been done (Walsh, 2011). Although researchers have made attempts to describe the interactional processes of the language classroom (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2006), a limited number of them have used such descriptive knowledge with the aim of changing the interactional practice of L2 teachers, which would perhaps result in changing the architectural structure of their classroom (Seedhouse, 2004). Most teacher education programs (pre-service and in-service) have devoted a considerable amount of time to teaching methods and to subject knowledge (Johnson, 2009; Walsh, 2011). Few, as Walsh (2006) suggests, have devoted nearly enough time to promote understandings of interactional processes effective in recontextualizing the interactional organization of the classroom. As Walsh argues, both teachers and learners need to acquire what he calls 'Classroom Interactional Competence' (CIC), if they are to work effectively together. That is, teachers and learners must make use of a range of appropriate interactional and linguistic resources in order to promote active and engaged learning.

Therefore, the basic underpinning of this study is that language teachers can improve their professional practice by developing a closer understanding of classroom discourse and, in particular, by focusing on the complex relationship between language, interaction and learning. Also, as Walsh (2011) argues, instead of simply describing the discourse of second language classrooms—a phenomenon which has been embraced by people in the field for more than half a century—we need to promote understanding and facilitate professional development of the teachers regarding classroom interaction. To this end, the present study, inspired in general by tenets of Vygotskian sociocultural theory regarding the importance of scientific concepts in learning, and in particular the three already-identified positive classroom practices by Walsh (2011), (including convergence of language use and pedagogic goals, need for interactional space and shaping learner contributions) aimed at answering the following questions:

(1) What was the attitude of the participating teacher toward her classroom behavior before the intervention sessions?

(2) Did the experience of intervention (raising awareness of positive, constructive classroom features through critical reflection) change the perception of the teacher toward her classroom behavior? If so, in what ways were her perceptions changed?

2. Review of the related literature

2.1. A brief overview of research into teachers' professional development
Due to the popularity of survey research methods and introspective studies in 1970s, early research in the teacher education discipline mainly focused on investigating teachers' attitude toward the staff development programs (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, research in this field oriented to understanding the characteristics of effective professional development, focusing on actual practices rather than attitudes (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Since 1990s, due to the impact of sociocultural thinking in teacher professional development, the literature on teachers' in-service training has turned toward conceptualizations of learning as ongoing, social, situated, and actively constructed (Grimmett, 2014; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Webster-Wright, 2009).

2.2. The sociocultural perspective on teachers' professional development

The present research theoretically adheres to the underpinnings of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) in general and mediation theory in particular which posits that learning is the result of internalization of artifacts, concepts, and activities which during the time have shaped the socio-cultural environment within which the individual has formed his/her identity. The study particularly draws on the theorization of Vygotsky (1986) regarding concept development, as well as recent proponents of sociocultural approaches to teacher development (Davydov, 1990; Karpov, 2003), and also Rogoff's (2003) model of participatory appropriation which argues that simple assimilation of social variables does not result in transformation of thinking and acting of individuals.

As for the field of L2 teacher education, the epistemological bases of a sociocultural perspective on human learning can offer rewarding tips for the field of SLTE (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011). This is because underpinning this theory is a view of teacher learning as a developmental never-ending process which strives to educate, train, and develop teachers who can successfully meet the requirements of the social, historical, and cultural contexts where they are teaching. Hawkins and Norton (2009) argue that the notion of universal "best practices" drawn from the re-search findings based on positivistic theoretical underpinnings has been misguided. Therefore, teachers need a tool kit of teaching ideas, methods and materials from which they can draw what-ever meets their teaching challenges in their own context and on which they can build their profes-sional identity. As a solution to the problem of incongruence between content knowledge and pedagogy knowledge of English language teachers, elements of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, especially genetic law of development, and the concepts of mediation and zone of proximal devel-opment are seen as instructive. Through efforts to internalize these concepts in a dialogic way, the field of professional teacher development can improve learning for students in L2 classrooms (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011).

2.3. Reconceptualizing and recontextualizing practice in teachers' professional development

Inspired by the tenets of sociocultural and cultural historical theories of learning, teacher educators such as Freeman and Johnson (2005), Freeman and Richards (1996), Johnson (2009), Johnson and Golombek (2002, 2003, 2011), and Pekarek Doehler (2010) have articulated that the best way to en-able teachers to improve student learning is to replace teachers' everyday concepts of learning and teaching with already-emerging scientifically researched ones. They argue that this does not hap-pen through rote memorization of the scientifically researched concepts. Instead, it can come about through the process of verbalizing their present thoughts, their gradual awareness-raising of their present concepts and reflecting on their classroom behavior. The cyclical awareness raising of teachers' present conception of teaching-learning accompanied by critical reflection on their class-room practice can gradually result in reconceptualizing their teaching, which in turn can lead to re-contextualizing their classroom practice (Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Grimmett, 2014; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Walsh, 2011).

For conceptual development to be effective in follow-up teacher performance, the availability of multiple and sustained opportunities for dialogic mediation, scaffolded learning and assisted perfor-mance seems mandatory, as teachers participate in and learn about relevant aspects of their pro-fessional development (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). To this end, the present study was an attempt to reveal how an EFL teacher's view toward her classroom practices was appropriated, reconstruct-ed, and transformed in her own pedagogic context. This was done through dialogic mediation be-tween the mentor teacher and the participating teacher (Sara) who focused on awareness of and critical reflection on Sara's current and emerging views, attitudes, and practices.

3. Method

3.1. Participants
The participant of the present study was an Iranian female EFL teacher with pseudonym Sara who was teaching in Language Teaching Institutes in Kermanshah Province, Iran. She held BA in TEFL, and also had 8 years of experience of teaching in informal context of education in Iran at the time of the study. She was highly motivated to participate in the study since, based on prolonged familiarity with one of the researchers, she strongly held the belief that the study would contribute to her professional practice. She was a native speaker of Persian, and also was native-like speaker of English.

3.2. Design, data collection, and procedure
Based on the nature of the required data and the research questions of the study, the present study gave priority to a qualitative approach for data collection and analysis.

Data were collected through reflective writings as well as stimulated recalls of Sara's classroom interactional behavior which were videotaped by Sara herself during her classroom practice. During the study, one of the researchers acted as a teacher mentor. In recent teacher development programs, more experienced teachers help the inexperienced and less competent teachers to professionally develop their teaching conceptions. The teacher mentor had a contributing role during the professional development process of Sara, by introducing the scientifically researched concepts relating to positive classroom interaction put forward by Walsh (2011).

The mentor teacher and Sara had a close working relationship during the study. The interactions between Sara and mentor teacher were of two types. The mentor teacher both introduced the proved-as-positive interactive strategies to Sara and made her aware of positive and negative interactive strategies that Sara employed in her classroom interaction.

The study proceeded in the following order.

First, Sara was required to videotape two of her teaching sessions in two successive weeks. A week later, Sara was required to write her first reflection on her classroom behavior. One day after the reflective writing, Sara reviewed her videotaped practice of her own two teaching sessions in presence of the mentor teacher. During this review, she was asked to reflect on her classroom behavior. The aim was to elicit present thinking of Sara on her classroom practice. Her reaction on her classroom behavior was audio-recorded for follow-up analysis. The main aim of both the first reflective writing and the stimulated recall was to recognize the outer limits of this teachers' ZPD (Johnson, 2009). The mediational means through which such verbalization (Gal'perin, 1989) emerges can be reflective writings, collaborative activities with colleagues, reading and responding to theoretical readings, or sustained dialogic interactions with "expert others" (teacher educators, colleagues, etc.) (Johnson & Golombek, 2011).

Next, in three workshop sessions, Sara and the mentor teacher had dialogic mediation on classroom positive strategies put forward by Walsh (2011). For the targeted classroom interactional features (see Appendix A). Before each workshop, Sara was required to study the specified section of the book "Exploring Classroom Discourse Language in Action" by Walsh (2011) which was used as the main tool for awareness-raising during the workshop sessions. The main purpose behind the workshop sessions was changing the attitude of Sara regarding classroom interaction. The workshop sessions were held once in every two weeks successively. Each workshop session lasted for two hours. During the first workshop session, the teacher mentor introduced Sara to the classroom positive strategies put forward by Walsh. During the second and third workshop sessions, some videotaped classroom practice of two other teachers were displayed to Sara while she was required to identify the kinds of negative and positive strategies the teachers employed in their classroom interaction.

Then, with the interval of five days, the second reflective writing was conducted. The main purpose behind this reflective writing was to see whether the instructor employed in her speech the mediated scientific concepts that had been dialogically discussed during the workshop sessions or not.

Next, Sara videotaped one of her classes once for every two weeks, three videotaped sessions overall. The day after each videotaping, the mentor teacher and Sara reviewed the video. During the review, the mentor teacher posed some questions regarding Sara's behavior to which Sara reacted. Her reactions were audio-recorded for follow-up analysis. Then, each videotaped class was critically reflected on by the mentor teacher in the presence of the instructor to give her awareness regarding the use of positive and negative interactional features (Appendix A) and how she might increase her use of positive features.

Finally, with an interval of two months, the third reflective writing was conducted to see whether Sara had the mediated scientific concepts at her command as concrete operating tools. For a better depiction of the procedure, the timeline, the events, and the purpose of each event is given in Table 1.

Then recordings and transcripts of both reflective writings and stimulated recalls were analyzed using Hatch's (2002) procedure for interpretive analysis to identify emerging patterns in the data. This procedure involves recording ideas and impressions in the form of research "memos" that are subsequently studied to identify emerging interpretations. Finally, these interpretations are carried back to the data to ensure that they are supported and to make further refinements.

Table 1. Timeline of the study		
Data	**Event**	**Purpose**
20 April 2015	Recording the first session (prior to workshop)	To explore Sara's before-workshop interactional behavior
27 April 2015	Recording the second session (prior to workshop)	To explore Sara's before-workshop interactional behavior
4 May 2015	1st reflective writing	To elicit present thinking of Sara
5 May 2015	1st stimulated recall	To elicit present thinking of Sara
11 May 2015	1st workshop session	Dialogic mediation on positive classroom practices
18 May 2015	2nd workshop session	Dialogic mediation on positive classroom practices
25 May 2015	3rd workshop session	Dialogic mediation on positive classroom practices
30 May 2015	2nd reflective writing	To elicit Sara's thinking after workshops
1 June 2015	1st classroom videotaping (post workshops)	Videotaping after-workshop classroom behavior of Sara
2 June 2015	1st stimulated recall critical reflection (post workshops)	Eliciting Sara's emerging concepts
15 June 2015	2nd classroom videotaping (post workshops)	Videotaping after-workshop classroom behavior of Sara
16 June 2015	2nd stimulated recall and critical reflection	Eliciting Sara's emerging concepts
29 June 2015	3rd classroom videotaping (post workshops)	Videotaping after-workshop classroom behavior of Sara
30 June 2015	3rd stimulated recall and critical reflection	Eliciting Sara's emerging concepts
30 August 2015	3rd reflective writing	To elicit Sara's thinking 2 months after the workshops

In the case of the classroom reflection data, the research memos focused on instances from the instructor's reactions on her classroom practice that could be interpreted as examples of thinking or acting using the new concepts related to classroom interaction. The words used by the participating teacher to express ideas that became focal points of the analysis appear in italics in the excerpts from critical reflection sessions. In all samples of reflective writings and stimulated recalls, Sara's conceptions were repeated times and again. However, to avoid repetition, small representative examples from the transcripts are presented.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Verbalization of current thinking of Sara regarding her classroom interaction

A mentioned earlier, to elicit present thinking of the participating instructor about her classroom interactional strategies, she was asked to reflect on her present views through the first reflective writing memo. Also, she videotaped two of her classrooms so that her interactional practice would be spotlighted in the presence of the mentor teacher. In her reactions, despite some implicit reference to the importance of interaction in English classes which in fact originated from her everyday concepts, no explicit traces of positive interactional concepts and its subcomponents were found. An excerpt of her reflection is presented below.

> **Reflective writing I:** Teachers need to *take care of how they interact*. Of course, although *interaction is very important*, the teacher must not forget to *correct the leaner's mistake*. I think *teachers must talk a lot in the class* so that students get a lot of oral input. … I usually have *a lot of repetition of words and sentences* so that my learners learn the *correct pronunciation of words*. If students do not listen to what I say, they don't have enough words to use to talk. Whenever my students *make a mistake*, I immediately *stop them* and *give them correct samples* so that they *won't commit the same mistake again*. …. I think another good point is that I should *encourage my students when they talk* by *using such expressions as* "ok", "all right"*, that is nice*". This way they start talking, but I should be careful and *not let them commit mistakes* because, if *I don't correct their mistakes*, they don't think it is a mistake and *they will commit it again*.

As the first reflecting writing shows, before the workshop sessions started, Sara believed in an abundance of teacher talk, interrupting the learners to correct their mistakes, and a lot of form-focused feedback which are all signs of impeding the interactional flow. The stimulated recall on the first two videotaped classroom practices also illustrated her ideology regarding her classroom interaction. The following excerpts of her first stimulated recall represent this.

One of the major characteristics of Sara's interactional behaviors was the use of many teacher echoes. On being asked why she had so many teacher echoes, she reflected as follows:

> **Stimulated recall I**: Here *I think I should repeat the words* "catastrophic, reproduction, fertilization" *several times* so that the learners learn how to pronounce them. … Look, they don't hear this new word outside the class and *I am the only resort for them*, so do not you think that *my repetition is the best thing for them*. I usually have the habit of *a lot of repetitions* when I feel *a new structure is emerging* so that it *sticks well in the mind* of the learners.

Another landmark feature of the teacher's classroom interaction was many interruptions and corrections of the learners' mistakes. On being asked why she had so many interruptions, she reflected as follows:

> **Stimulated recall I:** Look, here *I stop the learners, just to correct their grammatical mistakes* so that they use it correctly. Students think that I know everything and *if I don't stop them, they think that there is no mistake in their speech, so they commit it again*. I think students don't regard me as somebody powerful in the class if they don't stop them. This way I show them that *they must learn to speak the language I myself speak it*.

One other characteristic of Sara's classroom behavior was overuse of teacher talk which made the students silent during most of teacher–learner interaction moments. Asked for the reason, she reacted:

> **Stimulated recall I:** I *can't wait for the students to start uttering* some unattractive sentences *which are full of grammatical mistakes and mispronunciations.* My classroom time is very important to me, so *if I use it and talk more, the students are exposed to more language. Even if I stop and wait for learners, they don't talk in English. I don't like to waste my class time just waiting*, there are many points that I must talk about in the class time.

4.1.1. Summary of the pre-intervention results

As the first reflective writing and stimulated recall data revealed, the teacher held some beliefs which were in fact indicative of debilitating classroom interaction competence during the early phase of the study. Walsh (2006) defines classroom interactional competence (CIC) as "teachers' and learners ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning" (p. 132). Sara didn't exhibit this CIC in these initial data. According to Seedhouse (2004) and Walsh (2006, 2011), too much teacher talk, reticence on part of the students, frequent interruptions, and too many corrections are among the characteristics of negative classroom interaction. These features were present in both the beliefs and behaviors of Sara regarding her own classroom interaction.

4.2. After-the-workshop sessions

In three workshop sessions which were held in three successive weeks, Sara and the mentor teacher practiced dialogic mediation on classroom positive strategies as put forward by Walsh (2011). These were used as the main tool for awareness-raising and positive classroom knowledge development by Sara. The main purpose on the workshop sessions was to instigate changes in Sara's perspective and her classroom practice. A week after the last workshop, the instructor was required to write on her past and present thinking regarding her classroom interaction. Three excerpts of her reflections are given below.

> **Reflective writing II:** *Once I thought whatever I did in the classroom was the best.* Before, *I never let my students make any mistakes* because I thought they will commit the mistakes forever. I persistently interrupted my learners in order not to let them say something wrong. *… I think too much interruption damages the participatory structure of the classroom.* As a teacher, I must just *facilitate the flow of participation by assisting my learners and by shaping their incomplete turns.* I think I must let them *perform extended learner turns* by just *cutting down on my talk time* in case my talking is debilitating than facilitating.

After the workshop sessions, Sara believed that interruption and teacher echo must be mostly replaced with comprehension check and clarification request by giving enough space to the learner to participate in the focal language of the lesson and take risks.

> **Reflective writing II**: *Too much interruption and direct repair harms the flow of interaction. So, instead of interruption, instead of frequent repeating of an expression, I must seek clarification of the learners and checking their comprehension by asking referential questions* and *assisting them in shaping their talk* in the most optimal way. … One thing which I think might have overwhelmed me in my classes is *my lack of patience.* Once *I ask a question, I don't wait enough for the learner or learners to think. This causes my learners remain reticent* because *they don't have interactional space to react.*

One more point that emerged out of the workshop reflections was the constant emphasis she put on necessity of space for learning. According to Walsh (2011), space for learning refers to the extent to which teachers and learners provide interactional space that is appropriate for the specific pedagogical goal of the moment. After the workshop sessions Sara's reflection reveals changes in how she saw the relationship between pedagogic goal of the moment and appropriate interactional space between teacher and learners.

Reflective Writing II: *Of course I don't mean that students don't have to be corrected at all or a teacher shouldn't repeat a word or an utterance*. In fact, *everything has its own due time in class*. Classroom interaction changes moment by moment, so *depending on the teaching goal of the teacher, he/she can use the appropriate interactional strategy*. ... If *the learners don't understand an utterance, I must repeat it and it is not teacher echo*.

One aspect of classroom interactional competence, according to Walsh (2011) is teachers' matching of language use with their intended pedagogic goals. It appears from the data excerpt above that Sara, at least on the surface, changed her attitude toward her classroom interactional behavior in some respects. For the dialogic mediation practice in the workshop sessions to be considered effective, however, changes in Sara's behavior must be seen in the ongoing, interactive moments between the learners and her.

After it became evident that Sara had to some degree reconceptualized her classroom interaction conception, the teacher mentor wanted her to see how she reflected on her classroom behavior.

4.3. Changes in the teacher's after-workshop classroom interactions

After the three workshop sessions, Sara was required to videotape one of her classes with the interval of every two weeks. Then, the day after videotaping, the mentor teacher and Sara reflected on her behavior to see how she reacted on her classroom behavior. Upon being questioned about some of her classroom practices, she manifested some insightful reactions. The following excerpt is Sara's reaction to the mentor's critical reflection on the video of her first after-workshop classroom interaction behavior.

Stimulated recall II: I admit that *I shouldn't repeat that much*. I know that I must not repeat, but *I cannot control myself not to repeat*. ... *I think I must still extend my wait* time, *here I try to so but I cannot resist my temptation*. In fact *it has become a habit for me*. See, *whenever I wait a bit longer, the learners give out something, but whenever I don, wait they stay silent*. ... *I mustn't use such expressions as* "OK", "all right", "very good", and the like *since I stop the communicative moments*. Here, I have too much use of such expressions which I think unconsciously impede the interaction and negotiation on part of the learners. ...

Viewing the video of her classroom practice, Sara seemed to be critical of her behavior in interactional moments with the learners. However, she admitted that she couldn't put her new ideas into practice since she had not got used to them at the time. However, in her next critical reflection session, she admitted that she could, better than before, control her classroom participatory structure. The following is an excerpt from her reaction during the mentor teacher's critical reflection on her second after-workshop classroom interaction behavior.

Stimulated recall III: I *think I have changed a lot* during the past month or so. I have *cut down on my quantity of interruptions, my repetitions, my frequent corrections*, and the like. See *I have extended my wait time*, and *the learners talk if I wait a bit longer*. ... I am *not using such expressions as* "all right"*, and* "OK" *as before*. Instead I am trying to contribute my learners to better shape what they say. ... I have *much clarification request* than before and this let the learners to *actively participate and extend their turns*. ... *I think I am using the kind of strategy which is appropriate for the pedagogic moment*. Look, whenever I feel here is a need for correction I do it, but I try not to harm the flow of interaction. ... However, *I think I still need more practice and focus in my class to forget my wrong habits*.

As the third stimulated recall showed, Sara finally seemed to have embraced the regarded-as-positive classroom interactional strategies. To put it another way, the new scientific concepts were gradually becoming new psychological tools under the control of Sara. However, as she herself agreed, her use of these strategies was not perfect at the time. She accepted that more classroom practice was required to make her classroom behavior better.

Stimulated recall IV: Now *I think that my use of linguistic expressions and interactional strategies are in harmony with my pedagogic goal*. Whenever I see it necessary, I step in and contribute. Whenever I don't see it necessary I step aside let the conversation go on. I think I have changed a lot regarding my use of interactional strategies. Look *I have less interruption, less repetition and echo, less direct feedback than before*. I can tangibly feel *changes in the interactional patterns of my classroom*. ... I am not nervous when I teach. ... Look, it is very important to know how to react and what the students say. They have become very self-reliant. ... *You can see I don't directly repair, echo, interrupt except some cases which don't appeal me*. I have *more clarification request, more comprehension check; more wait time, less teacher talk* (if not necessary). Now I have the interactional strategies more under my control. However, I still need to consciously think of them if I want them to be handy when needed.

The fourth stimulated recall showed that Sara was bringing the new strategies more fully under her control. The teacher seemed to know when to employ each interactional strategy. That is, she believed that each particular pedagogic moment required its own specific interactional strategy.

4.4. Changes in Sara's practice and beliefs after two months

The last data collection phase included Sara's third reflective writing which was conducted two months after the last critical reflection session. On being asked to reflect on how she perceived her classroom interactional behavior at the time, Sara reacted as follows:

Reflective writing III: *There are interactional behaviors on part of the teacher that can both facilitate impede the interactional process*. Teachers need to be familiar with them ... On the positive side, *teachers need to extend their wait time* if they want their learners to become active. Before, *I didn't wait enough*, so my learners didn't react. *Now I typically wait for three seconds after each question*, and my students usually answer my questions. That is very good for me. ... *Another positive classroom behavior is trying to shape what the learner says through clarification request, comprehension check, appropriate scaffolding, and collaborative assistance*. Just *saying "OK", "all right", and expressions like that blocks the communication since the learner positively assesses himself or herself and does go on with the interaction*. These days, my main focus is on contributing my learners to continue with what they say by assisting them and shaping their utterances carefully. ... *Another issue of importance is trying to use the language which is consistent with the pedagogic goal of the moment. For example, if my learners are fluently uttering something comprehensible, I don't feel any need to try to interrupt the interaction flow to correct a mispronunciation or a grammatical mistake. Everything has its own place. My previous classroom behavior, I accept, was impeding because it was full of interruption, correction, teacher echo, and the like. This in turn didn't let my students express themselves and they just remained reticent during most of the class time.*

Looking into the data, one can see that Sara could distinguish both positive and negative classroom interactional behavior (Appendix A). Some of positive features of classroom interactional behavior include comprehension checks, clarification requests, extended learner turns, extended wait time, more referential questions, and more content feedback, whereas frequent teacher interruption, excessive teacher echo, less wait time, more display questions, and less content feedback are among the negative classroom interactional strategies. She noted that she felt she had changed her classroom interaction style. This was evident in her evaluation of her past interactional behavior and her description of her current practices.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study deserve scholarly consideration from several perspectives. In line with Thompson (1997), the present study suggests that data which illustrates the changing pedagogies of teachers, rather than just describing what is happening in the classroom context between the teacher and learners, is of value. Although descriptive studies have increased our understanding of the ways in which languages are learnt in the classroom setting, they have not paid enough attention to how to improve the interactional structure of the classroom through research-supported interventions in the teacher's classroom behaviors. To this end, and in line with studies which have

focused on reflective teaching including Alger(2006), Edge(2001), Bartlett(1990), Park (2001), and Zeichner and Liston (1996) the data collected through different phases of this study shows the benefits of putting classroom discourse at the center of reflective practice and advocates a more structured approach to the process of reflection on practice (Walsh, 2006, 2011).

In line with Johnson and Golombek (2011) p. xi), the present study suggests that, to better support teachers' professional development, and to create harmony between teachers' professional development on the one hand and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which that professional development occurs, we need to step into exploring classroom moment-by-moment complexities, determine the present practices of the in-service teachers, and then articulate sound ways to support and enhance teacher professional development within SLTE programs. In this regard, the present study systematically revealed the current thinking of and practices of one teacher, and then, through raising awareness and dialogically mediating on her practices, enabled that teacher to adopt new practices, reconceptualizing her classroom interaction practices.

This reshaping of practice is also in line with Wallac (1998)who claims that reflective practice invite teachers to adopt a retrospective stance and reflect on their past actions in an attempt to increase their understanding of the teaching/learning process. The results of stimulated recall I, III, IV as well as the reflective writing III show the teacher frequently described how she had changed her practice. According to proponents of sociocultural theory in teacher education (Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998, 2005; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Grimmett, 2014; among others), theoretical concepts offer new ways of understanding the world by going beyond what we know from our everyday experiences. Here we saw how the teacher equipped with such positive interactional concepts as "increasing wait-time", "shaping learner contributing instead of excessive praise", and "using language which is appropriate for the pedagogic goal of the moment" articulated that her past everyday concepts had not been as useful as the new concepts she learned in enabling her to manage the interactional architecture of the classroom (Seedhouse, 2004).

The findings of the study support Vygotsky's (1987) argument that for scientific concepts to be concrete operating tools for the learner to act upon, they must be fully explored and absorbed. In line with this, the present study showed that the path to bringing scientific concepts under psychological control was a "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987). Despite introducing the classroom interactional positive strategies in the workshop sessions, we saw that the participating teacher couldn't concretely act upon her new psychological tools immediately (stimulated recalls I, and II). The data showed that the process of professional development for the in-service teacher is as Johnson and Golombek (2011) put it, a complex, dynamic, never-ending process which must be supported by emerging scientific concepts in the research field of SLA by providing repeated and appropriate mediation. Through appropriate dialogic mediation using such tools as awareness-raising and critical reflection, internalization of identified-as-positive classroom interaction features (see Appendix A) can come about. This can in turn result in teachers'—conceptualizing of present thinking and follow-up recontextualizing their classroom practice.

6. Conclusion, implications and suggestions for further research

Thinking through and consequently acting based on identified-as-positive theoretical concepts in teacher education appeared to be a beneficial strategy for one teacher—Sara. The present study focused on one case, therefore further studies with more teachers with varying demographic characteristics, experience, and academic levels are necessary. Also, the participant of the study was a female teacher, so conducting studies including male teachers is recommended.

For years, teacher educators have been striving for finding a solution to how to improve professional development programs for teachers (both pre-service and in-service). Following the emergence of critical pedagogy, professionals in the field of teacher education have turned to engaging teachers themselves as active participants who can help improve the present status of teacher

education. This study shed light on this approach to teacher development by employing such tools as awareness-raising followed by critical reflection.

In the preliminary phase of the study, the verbalizing of the present thinking of the participating teacher, Sara, about classroom interaction (reflective writing I & stimulated recall I) showed that she was neither familiar with nor enacted regarded-as-positive classroom interaction practices. The data which were collected after the workshop through reflective writing II, and III as well as stimulated recalls of the follow-up behavior of the teacher showed that the teacher gradually reshaped both her thinking tools and her classroom practices as a result of critical reflection on her classroom practice.

The process of Sara's reconceptualizing of her classroom interactional concepts and follow-up recontextualizing of her practice, however, followed a circuitous path. Her reflections and reactions blended elements of her prior perspectives and experiences with ideas gained from the workshop data and critical reflection sessions. This mixing of the past and present experiences signaled the initial steps in concept development, thereby shaping a new ZPD which opened a mediational space for the new theoretical concepts to develop. Also, concretizing these new practices requires a constant, cyclical, never-ending cycle of classroom action and subsequent reflection on action which is accompanied by raising awareness of, constructing, and deconstructing classroom interactional strategies.

The results of present study can be illuminating for policy-makers, syllabus designers, teacher educators, and teachers. Policy-makers continually reconsider their policies searching for ways to make nation-wide plans for more effective and efficient professional development of teachers. Syllabus designers and material developers look for innovative ways to design course materials which have positive interactional features within their focus. Van Lier (2001) notes that the quality of classroom interactions is the most important issue in second language teaching and learning. Therefore, teacher educators and teachers might use the present findings regarding classroom interactions to address improving their practice.

The introduction of concept development in general and conceptual development through awareness raising of and critical reflection on teachers' practice in the epistemology of sociocultural theory to teacher education is still in its infancy in teacher professional development among L2 teachers. Since spotlighting local contexts of education regarding interactional features is gaining significance, further research is required to more deeply delve into classroom microstructures.

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Appendix A

Classroom positive and negative interactional features (taken from Walsh, 2011)

Positive:

1. Clarification request
2. Comprehension checks
3. Extended learner turns
4. Extended wait time

5. More referential questions
6. Turn completion
7. Proper scaffolding
8. Minimal response tokens
9. More content feedback
10. Less form feedback
11. Convergence of language use and pedagogic goals
12. Less repair

Negative:

1. Excessive teacher echo
2. Excessive teacher interruption
3. Less wait time
4. More display questions
5. Excessive response tokens
6. More form feedback
7. Less content feedback
8. More repair

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