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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a qualitative case study of two English for Academic Purposes (EAP) university teachers' unplanned decisions to focus on language form and the factors impacting on those decisions. These unplanned decisions included all diversions from a lesson in progress to focus on language form, not only corrective feedback, and not only teacher-initiated episodes. Data was collected via videotaping and non-participant observations of the lessons (with fieldnotes), followed up by semi-structured stimulated recall interviews (audio taped) with the teacher participants. It was found that the unplanned teacher -initiated form-focused episodes (FFEs) stemmed primarily from the teachers' knowledge of the students and the teachers' experience teaching the course (affirming previous studies) and to a lesser degree a belief in contextualized grammar instruction. However, one significant finding was the teachers' responses to student-initiated FFE—an area given less attention in current research. Whether or not the teacher took up and continued the student-initiated FFE was found to be dependent upon the teachers' interpretation of the episodes as an opportunity (positive) or threat (negative). Teacher identity (and emotion), and structure and context of the FFE are found to be underlying reasons for these interpretations.

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Classroom teaching involves many unanticipated events requiring in-the-moment decisions. These decisions to divert from a lesson in progress may be to provide some form of brief corrective feedback (CF) or more lengthy grammar instruction. Investigating these in-the-moment FoF decisions may reveal a more accurate picture of a teacher's deeply rooted beliefs and conceptions (Li, 2017 p. 136) because when under pressure, a teacher will revert to 'defaults' (Tomlinson, 1999 in M. Borg, 2005) in decision-making. To date, many studies have sought to understand unplanned focus on grammar forms from the perspective of learner uptake and second language acquisition particularly in communicative language teaching (CLT) classrooms with an emphasis on CF. Only more recently have studies sought to investigate underlying reasons for teacher unplanned form-focused instruction *beyond* CF and fewer still within English for

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Academic Purposes settings in non-Western EFL contexts. Basturkman's (2012) review of research into teachers' beliefs and classroom practice concluded with a call for further research into incidental, unplanned decisions to focus on form—a gap this research attempts to fill.

2. Literature Review

The bulk of the research into unplanned form-focused instruction has centered on corrective feedback, especially strategies (e.g. Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Sheen, 2004) and any resulting evidence of learner uptake contributing to language acquisition (e.g. Ellis et al. 2001; Loewen, 2005; Sheen, 2011). Teacher cognition research – the study of what teachers believe, know, think, and do (Borg, 2003) -- has begun to investigate teachers' CF practices in terms of quantity, timing, types, and the factors underpinning those practices. Some of these factors include the teachers' personal language learning experiences (Numrich, 1996; Rahimi & Zhang 2015), teaching experiences (novice versus expert, e.g. Mackey et al. 2004), and apprenticeship of observation (both positive and negative, Moodie, 2016; Junqueira & Kim, 2013). Student affective considerations (Mori, 2011, Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Roothooft, 2014) and the teacher's knowledge of the students' L1 (Mori, 2011) and students' schooling (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Mori, 2011) have also been found to influence a teacher's corrective feedback decisions.

Studies have also investigated the reasons a teacher will divert from a lesson in progress to focus on form more generally, not only corrective feedback. Bailey's early qualitative study (1996) of six experienced ESL teachers revealed six principles of teacher impromptu decision-making. Two of these principles emerged in grammar-specific unplanned events-- *accommodate students' learning styles* and *serve the common good*. In one case the teacher chose to divert from the lesson to focus on her students' common problem with prepositions. The teacher said that she was prepared to handle this grammar form because she had taught the level many times previously and was ready with her 'bag of tricks' (p. 29). She chose to *accommodate her students' learning styles* and their desire for 'grammar, pencilly, writey-down things' (p. 31). In another example, a student interrupted an in-progress discussion on topic sentences to ask about run-on sentences. The teacher took up the student-initiated opportunity because she felt the topic was relevant and of observable interest to most students. It *served the common good* of the class thus justifying the use of the teacher's noted limited class time.

More recent teacher cognition studies have sought to discover the relationship between teachers' knowledge about grammar (KAG) and impromptu form-focused decisions. Some studies have found that the degree to which a teacher seriously engages in grammar (planned and unplanned) is related to the degree of a teacher's self-confidence and/or self- perception with knowledge about grammar (Andrews, 1999; 2007; Borg, 2001; Nazari & Allahyar, 2012; Sanchez, 2014). 'Rose' in Andrews's (1999) study expressed her fear of grammar and fear of teaching grammar to her secondary school students due in good part to the lack of explicit grammar instruction in her own previous schooling. Rose believed such grammar instruction made a 'valuable contribution' to student language learning (p.167) but because of her own fear of grammar she relied heavily on the textbook for any grammar instruction. When Rose was observed departing from the lesson material 'script', inaccuracies and contradictions were noted which Andrews concluded were due to Rose's limited knowledge of the language. Nazari & Allahyar (2012) studied the grammar teaching practices and cognitions of four Iranian EFL teachers. In one case, 'Mina' avoided all grammar focus and refused to provide corrective feedback on student errors or answer students' grammar questions (p. 77) instead referring her students to the examples provided in the textbook. Her negative attitudes towards grammar (e.g. grammar is useless; boring) and her refusal to provide any grammar instruction led the researchers to conclude that these avoidance practices were a consequence of Mina's insufficient KAG.

Lack of confidence in KAG has also been found to result in a teacher's uncharacteristic classroom behaviour or demeaner. An early study by Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman (1989) found that the English teachers who felt unsure of their KAG tended to avoid grammar instruction but, when they did teach it, they adopted uncharacteristic teaching styles such as lecturing rather than the usual interactive student engagement and behaviours such as racing through homework while avoiding student eye contact. These atypical classroom practices seemed to serve to shield the teachers from any unexpected student-initiated focus on form.

The link between a teacher's insufficient KAG and a teacher's uncharacterisitc classroom behavior is also indentified in studies by Borg (2001) and Sanchez (2014). 'Eric', in Borg's study, rarely came to class with a predetermined plan to focus on form preferring 'largely impromptu' language focus based on students' problems he noted during classroom activities (p.22). This typical classroom behaviour, Borg argues, was evidence of Eric's overall confidence with KAG and his ability to handle unplanned grammar. However, uncharacteristic behaviour was recorded when the impromptu focus was student-initiated. When a student sought further explanation on a grammar point, Eric became notably uncomfortable, provided a quick and direct answer thus curtailing any further discussion because, he later confessed, he did not know the answer. Sanchez (2014) also found evidence of the influence of KAG on classroom practice. One EFL teacher in his study, 'Emma', typically provided immediate responses to students' questions with short explanations, simplified grammar rules or exam tips (p. 227). However, an atypical response was observed when a student raised a question that the teacher felt unable to answer. In this case there was a notably lengthy wait response time (17 seconds) followed by the teacher's 'strategy' of bouncing back the question to the students rather than providing an explanation in order to not lose face (p.225). A finding in both studies is that a teacher's self-perception of their KAG impacted on impromptu pedagogical decisions and in the examples above, student- initiated FFEs.

Teacher belief has also been investigated as a factor impacting on Focus on Form (FoF) classroom practice (e.g. Basturkmen et al., 2004; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Basturkmen et al. (2004) studied the correlation between beliefs and observed incidental FoF of three ESL language teachers in a private school in New Zealand. They found a 'tenuous' relationship between the two (later affirmed by Farrell & Lim, 2008; Farrell & Bennis, 2013) with the links between a teacher's beliefs and unplanned behavior weaker than links between beliefs and planned decisions. Incidental FoF decisions, they conclude, may be rooted in technical knowledge (abstract theories) and less accessible when under pressure whereas planned FoF decisions are grounded in practical knowledge derived from teaching practice and experiences and thus perhaps more stable.

Pertinent to this study, the data in Basturkmen et al. (2004) revealed notably few student-initiated form-focused episodes. The teachers were described as being 'unenthusiastic about students initiating FFEs' (p. 264) as such episodes interrupted the flow of the communicative activity. The researchers suggested that perhaps the students had perceived the teachers' (negative) attitude about student-initiated episodes, which in turn, then likely contributed to the low frequency of student-initiated episodes.

In summary, research to date has identified several factors impacting on teachers' unplanned decisions to focus on form. These include personal language learning experiences, teaching experiences (which include knowledge of the student and student affective considerations), a teacher's level of confidence and perceived degree of ability to handle language form, and to a lesser degree teacher beliefs.

3. The Study

Most studies investigating teacher unplanned decisions to focus on form have sought to uncover the link between teacher corrective feedback practice and learner uptake. Many teacher cognition studies into

unplanned FoF have been situated within communicative language teaching (CLT) with notably few studies within English for Academic Purposes settings and in non-Western EFL contexts. This study fills this gap.

The data reported here is part of a larger qualitative multiple case study (Yin, 2009) of four university level EAP teachers in Hong Kong. It sought to investigate planned as well as unplanned form focused decisions and factors impacting on those decisions asking the following question:

> What planned and unplanned decisions regarding the handling of language form do teachers make during the implementation of the language course and what factors impact on these decisions?

This paper will focus on the findings of the unplanned form-focused episodes observed in two final year EAP classrooms.

3.1. Context of Study

The research was conducted at a language center of large university in Hong Kong. The data reported here are from two final year English for Engineering courses—a graduation requirement for all engineering students thus satisfying the characteristics of typicality (Cohen et al., 2007; Richards, 2003). The required course materials were in-house, genre-based textbooks which included adapted passages from engineering sources as well as ten grammar-based exercises including such topics as identifying noun clauses, using pronoun references, passive and ergative, relative clauses, and verb tenses. The assessments for the course consisted of two writing assignments (literature review and/or methodology; progress report) and a poster presentation with grammar as one of the evaluation criteria. Thus, the course afforded many opportunities for a focus on form. The investigator also had first-hand knowledge of the course having taught it in a previous semester and thus confirming the suitability of the course for this study.

3.2. Participants

The two teachers selected for the study were similar in terms of education (both had master's degrees in teaching English), teaching experience at the university level (fifteen years), and both also had had experience teaching the particular course under investigation. The teachers were also selected because of their differences in terms of gender and background. Kalvin (pseudonym) was a locally born, non-native English-speaking teacher educated in Hong Kong, and Sandra (pseudonym) was a native English-speaking teacher, born and educated in a Western country.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected from 15 fifty-minute lessons (12 hours for each case) via three means: non-participant observations with field note taking, remote-capture videotaping, and semi-structured stimulated recall interviews with teachers (three times throughout the study, 3.5 (Sandra) or 4 hours (Kalvin). Non-participant observations of classroom instruction (Mackey & Gass, 2010) were chosen in order to record subtleties of the classroom environment missed by videotaping. This included students' non-verbal behavior during the lesson suggesting confusion, inattentiveness or other factors impacting on the classroom (e.g. low attendance due to major coursework deadlines and exams).

Form-focused episodes were identified during the observations, reviewed during the videotapes, and then confirmed (by the teachers) during the stimulated recall interviews. FFEs were identified as unexpected classroom events taking place 'spontaneously without prior intention' (Jean & Simard, 2011, p. 760) and marked 'from the point where the attention to linguistic form starts to the point where it ends

due to a change in topic back to message or sometimes to another focus on form' (Ellis et al. 2001, p.294). A broad definition of language form was adopted following Doughty and William (1998) as 'all levels of the complex system that is language' (p. 212). This broad understanding included grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (also adopted by others e.g. Basturkman et al., 2004).

The initiator of the unplanned episodes was also identified. Student-initiated episodes included queries of a linguistic item as well as incidences in which the student interrupted the flow of the lesson. In the data this appeared as challenges to the teacher's answer to a grammar-related exercise and coded as student-initiated (challenge). Teacher-initiated episodes included any diversion to focus on language form as well as reactive responses implicit (e.g. recasts, elicitation) or explicit (e.g. direct instruction; metalinguistic comments) (Ellis et al. 2001).[2]

Videotaping of the lessons was done unobtrusively via remote capture. That is, the video camera was attached to the ceiling in the back of the classroom and recorded by the university IT department (sent to the researcher within a week after taping). The videotaped lessons were transcribed in their entirety, supplemented with the any field notes not appearing on the video (e.g. notes written on the white board; handouts). Once FFEs were identified from the transcribed videos and fieldnotes, questions were formulated which were then used as the focus of the (audio-taped) semi-structured stimulated recall interviews (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Woods, 1996). A noted drawback to stimulated recall methodology is that participants' memories of the episode may be skewed, embellished or may continue to be shaped upon reflection (Swain, 2006). However, similar to Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis (2004) the stimulated recall questions were used as a 'point of departure' (p. 25) to prompt a larger discussion of the identified episodes.

The data was collected and analyzed on an on-going iterative (Newby, 2010) and cyclical process (Borg, 2012) in that each stage of data collection informed the subsequent stage (e.g. observations transcriptions and field notes were used to formulate SR interview questions). This iterative process also allowed for verification of tentative interpretations leading to 'new understandings and unanticipated themes' (Borg, 2012, p. 24). Finally, analysis of the data was conducted within each case as well as across case (comparing two cases) (Creswell, 2007).

4. Results

4.1 Kalvin

Kalvin's approach to teaching his EAP university students involved encouraging them to become independent learners by demonstrating how. Kalvin was a product of independent learning. He had learned English outside of the language classroom, by studying how the language functioned in authentic texts and by looking up examples in the dictionary. As a teacher, he also recognized the limited contributions the EAP course could make to the students' overall grammar improvement. So, he offered his students the strategy that had contributed to his own successful language learning. He said,

> I'm trying to sell what I believe…I try to make [the students] remember what they should do if they really want to improve their English though they may not have time … but at least they remember the way. [Interview 1]

---

[2] In the literature, coding also includes pre-emptive focus specific to task-based courses. As this is an EAP context, not task-based, such coding is not appropriate as there is no task per se in the course or data.

As a locally educated person, Kalvin understood the students' educational background firsthand with its emphasis on grammar rules over contextualized usage. This knowledge also influenced his stated beliefs. He said,

> Students need to go beyond grammar and learn the proper usage... the right expression in a particular context. That's why I emphasize the discourse approach... you use the right grammar for the right context. <...> At this level it's about raising students' awareness of the importance of usage instead of repeating grammar rules.' [Interview 1]

Throughout the classroom observations Kalvin gave frequent reminders throughout his classes to 'pay attention' to the language in context and to 'not be lazy' and to 'look up' language items if they wanted to improve their English. How Kalvin's beliefs[3] played out in unplanned FoF both teacher- and student-initiated are discussed below.

In Kalvin's data, four of the five unplanned FFEs were teacher-initiated. The first two examples that follow are representative of those teacher-initiated FFEs.

Example 1: Teacher-initiated

Kalvin arranged for three writing workshops throughout the term to be held in the language center's mini-theater (with student access to individual computers). He typically began these sessions with a review of language items that he had covered during a previous class (e.g. avoiding run-on sentences, choosing more formal words, or using relative clauses). The observed episodes were all one-to-one interactions and teacher-initiated although Kalvin did invite the students to 'talk to [him] any time if [they] have questions.' The following three extracts of corrective feedback are representative of the teacher-initiated FFEs during these writing workshops.

> Extract 1
>
> T: I don't understand the connection between ideas/ sentences. Your sentence structure is like Chinese English. This is a relative clause....and is this word countable or non-countable? Look it up. [Observation 5]
>
> Extract 2
>
> T: There is a run-on sentence here. The first sentence is actually two sentences. Do you remember? (Referring to a previous classroom exercise) [Observation 6]
>
> Extract 3
>
> T: Check to see if you are using the word correctly. Look for examples. Is it an adjective? It can be a verb. Look it up. You can't be lazy. [Observation 9]

Kalvin reminded students of the grammar focus of the lessons (*do you remember?)* and rather than giving students answers, he encouraged students to use his strategy for self-improvement. These practices reflected his desires to show students 'the way' to become independent English language learners (like himself).

Example 2: Teacher-initiated

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[3] The definition of beliefs in this study follows Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2004: 'statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what should be done, should be the case, and is preferable (p. 244).

In the extract that follows Kalvin provides feedback to students' written answers to a textbook exercise on changing non-academic words to more academic choices. Several students wrote their answer on the board.

Extract 4

T: Take a look at this second one. (points to the board) *The program contained some errors.* I'm not sure about this word, *contain some errors*. If you have a dictionary you can look it up. Do you usually say *the program contain* in your [engineering] textbook? I'm not sure. Can you think of an alternative?

S1: The program was tested.

T: Possible. *The program was tested.* (writes on the board) Okay, possible. Can you think of a more difficult one? A better word? *Run the program*...

S2: Execute

T: *Was executed... was tested. Problems arose when the program was executed*. Can you think of a better word? A more difficult word a word you usually see (in engineering texts) instead of *contain*? Let's try. [T looks ups the word on an online dictionary and projects on a screen]

T: *Include* may not be the right word... *process* ...no (teacher is scrolling through online results).

If you want to see whether this combination is used by other people, you can use a tool—Google. Put this in quotation marks (teacher demonstrates). If you are not sure you can check. Always look at the examples. [Observation 2]

In the above extract, it appears that Kalvin's goals for students' learning are reflected in his interactions with them (Li, 2017, p.67). He is modelling his own thinking processes and invites his students to contribute to this process. He is not concerned about not having the 'correct' answer nor does he seem to lack confidence in KAG. Rather his focus is on demonstrating how his students could solve such linguistic problems on their own.

Kalvin's own successes had convinced him that his language-learning strategy could be transferred to his students as a means to help them meet similar success as he had had. In fact, he had told students directly that this strategy is one he currently uses stating, 'I use online dictionaries with examples, so I can find the correct expression when I write'. [Observation 1] Thus, he was modeling both his past and on-going language learning strategy as evidence of its usefulness.

So far, the examples above have shown that Kalvin's belief in his independent learning strategies remain consistent in unplanned situations. However, when the FFE was student-initiated, inconsistencies are revealed.

Example 3: Student-initiated (challenge)

The final example below, lasting nearly four minutes, occurred within a planned grammar exercise focusing on run-on sentences. Kalvin selected this exercise because he recognized it as a recurring and persistent problem with his Hong Kong students. He explained that in Chinese 'a comma is acceptable to link complete sentences together' and was 'one of the big differences between English and Chinese' [Interview 2]. Before the exercise he reminded students to 'use proper English sentence structures' and 'write accurately without translating'. [Observation 1] In Extract 5 begins with Kalvin going over the answers with the students.

Extract 5

T: How can you correct this sentence?... (*You know that this is a good plan many of us do*). A complete sentence must have a subject and a verb. Can you find the subject the verb or can you find more than one? There are two complete sentences. So, it's a run-on sentence. (He reminds students of ways to correct run-on sentences by referring to what he had written on the board earlier).

S1: I think it is a correct sentence

T: It's a complete sentence?

S1: Yeah

T: Why?

S1: Because *you know that this is a good plan, many of us do* is something followed by *the plan.*

S2: Yes. *Many of us do.*

T: No. Think about the word *do*. We *do the plan*. Is… Something we know, that is good. The *do* here refers to the word, *know.* It doesn't make sense to use *do* with *the plan*. If you say *know the plan*, if you use a relative clause here…

S2: *That many of us do* and *that* can be omitted

T: You say it sounds like you *do the plan*… many of us know… many of us…(T reads the sentence many times to himself)

S2: But if you put into two sentences it is still *do the plan*…

T: You have to think about if we do the plan…. Does it make sense? I have a problem with using 'do' with plan. It sounds a bit awkward. I think *do* here refers to *know.* It makes more sense to me.

S3: What about if we add *many of us do so*…

T: Many of us do so. You have to think about whether you use do together with plan. *Do the plan*….Uh…. uh…many of us do so. But if you say *many of us do so* it may sound like *many of us*…. know that. (T continues to sound out the sentences listening carefully to himself) It sounds a bit awkward. So, I think *do* here refers here to *know*…many of us know, that this is a good plan. You have the subject you, you *know many of us know.* Does it make sense (reads the sentence out loud to himself). Uh... yeah it sounds like *many of us do know*. I still have a problem with using *do* together with *plan*. *I'm not going to do the plan.* It sounds a bit awkward. So, I think *do* here refer here *to know...many of us know*, that this is a good plan. It makes more sense to me. Any questions? (Looks around quickly). Okay good. The second one… [Observation 1]

This episode began when one student interrupted the flow of the teacher-fronted lesson, but it was very decisively ended with teacher's quick glance around the room and a verbal indication that it was time to move on. To the observer it seemed to be a means of escape from an uncomfortable episode. This was later confirmed by the teacher:

> I don't think I handled that part very well. I was ambushed. [This class] tended to be more critical than the other sections. After class I Googled the phrase 'do the plan'. It makes sense in some other contexts, but not in that sentence, I think. I didn't try to explain that again in the next lesson or send them an email (I sometimes do) because the sentence is not in context and, you know, we

> can always argue. I'll remember to come up with the lack of context excuse [in future] more quickly to get myself out of trouble! [Email correspondence]

During this student-initiated unplanned episode, it seemed as though Kalvin's grammatical knowledge was challenged resulting in atypical behaviour (see Borg, 2001; Sanchez, 2014). There seemed to be an opportunity here for him to demonstrate his strategy of looking up examples online, but this opportunity was not taken up nor did he follow up with students during the next class or via an email as he sometimes did. Like the EFL teachers in Mori (2011), Kalvin was motivated by his desire for students to gain both confidence and independence as evidenced in his teacher-initiated FFEs. However, opportunities to practice this strategy were not taken up when the FFE was student-initiated. Perhaps this was due to the more 'critical' nature of the class as well as the decontextualized nature of the exercises which opened the way for disagreement (*we can always argue*).

Finally, this student-initiated episode may also be the product of the student-centered learning environment Kalvin had created. As Varghese et al. (2005) have noted, students 'read us and respond to things about use of which we are not aware (p. 39). Kalvin had invited students to engage in discovering language in context during other lessons as he modelled his language learning strategy. Perhaps the students perceived this as another opportunity to jointly explore grammar.

4.2 Sandra

Student affective considerations were a significant contributing factor in Sandra's form-focused decisions. She was sensitive to any possible negative reactions from students. Too much grammar or the wrong kind of grammar focus, she feared, would result in students feeling bored, resentful, or insulted. This was revealed in comments made during interviews....

> (Students) can be very bored. As a teacher it can be rather crushing! [Interview 1]

> You've got to be careful about how much time you spend (on grammar) because they get resentful. [Interview 2]

> A lot of grammar with these guys is just reminding them of something they already know.... It's sort of awareness, them being able to spot things, looking for certain things. They will feel rather insulted if you made out that you were teaching them new things at this stage. It's revising and putting it in the context of technical writing. [Interview 3]

... as well as directed to the students during the lesson.

> I'm not trying to make you suffer. [Observation 11: Sentence Completion exercise]

> Now you're all yawning because you've heard it so many times before… [Observation 12: Context: Verb tenses]

Sandra's anticipation of negative reactions from students was likely acquired from her experiences teaching this particular course as well as teaching engineering students. As course coordinator she was also privy to student course evaluations which may also have contributed to her negative expectations.

Like Kalvin, Sandra also believed that grammar should be contextualized -- a necessary change from students' previous schooling which emphasized sentence-level grammar and rules. She commented,

> They've done a lot of sentence-level work and grammar rules in school and there hasn't been a jump from the sentence to the discourse level. [Interview 1]

Sandra would frequently begin a planned episode by asking students to notice the structures/verbs/words in a particular text and context. Noticing language in context, she believed, would cognitively engage students and thus prevent student boredom, resentment, and would not insult their intelligence. She said,

> …if they can use their brains and there is some variety in thinking, they can make notes and learn something useful for their Final Year Project... and take it seriously. Students can get into the activities, notice things in the language, and get very involved and mentally engaged if the activity itself is engaging enough. [Interview 1]

Thus, for Sandra, decisions to focus on form were based on affective considerations (to avoid anticipated negative student reactions) and included activities that would engage students cognitively (and prevent negative reactions).

In the data, there were nine unplanned FFEs. Of these nine, seven were teacher-initiated.

Example 1: Teacher-initiated

There were four instances of teacher-initiated corrective feedback in Sandra's data (pronunciation, word form and verb tense). Sandra chose to gather up in-class common errors (written or spoken) and then present them to the entire class rather than single out one student because 'it's not nice to point the finger at somebody' [Interview 1]. Similar to findings in other studies (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Nassaji, 2013; Rahimi & Zheng, 2014), Sandra did not want to embarrass her students. The following is an example of Sandra's corrective feedback on errors in verb tense.

> Extract 6
>
> T: Quick question. I noticed...I can't remember who, quite who, but someone said, 'Susan Murcott had attended a conference in Nepal in 1998. Many Nepali women attend this event.' (writes sentence on board). We've got *had attended* and *attended* here. Do you need to use *had attended here*?
>
> S: No.
>
> T: Why not?
>
> S: Because she was not attend the conference before the women attend the event. So, the event and the conference should be the same.
>
> T: Okay. Yeah. We are not changing the order. We can just use simple past. We don't need the *had* here. So, because the order of events is clear. Actually, it was at the same tie and its all the past. So, it's really very simple. You can talk about the whole event in the past. *Had attended* (points to the board).

The student's response (above) contained a salient grammatical error, but Sandra chose to ignore it, perhaps again not wanting to single out one student. Sandra also began the episode with questions rather than providing explicit answers also perhaps as a means of engaging the students and getting them to think (and thereby not insulting their intelligence).

Example 2: Student-initiated (Teacher-invited)

The following episode occurred within an activity in which students were given a short self-diagnostic grammar quiz. As students checked the answers to their quizzes, Sandra invited them to ask her questions about any item.

Extract 7

> T: What I'd like you to do is to look back and see if you can see why you made the errors. And secondly do you want to ask me any questions about the grammar item. You are not language specialists, so you don't need to understand why you got it right. Anything where you got it wrong and you don't understand.... Explanations are useful when you don't understand why something is wrong. Any questions? (T walks around the room as students mark their quizzes)
>
> S1: What the difference between *it and this*?
>
> T: Let's try a sentence on the board.
>
> [Teacher writes an example on the board]
>
> *It is a rainy day.* _____ *has caused many students to arrive late.*
>
> T: *It or this*?
>
> S1: It
>
> T: Let's have a vote. Hands up. Who would vote for *it*? Nobody. But a lot of people haven't voted. So, you people aren't sure. The *this* people. Can you explain?
>
> S2: I just know it is *this.*
>
> S3: You use *it* to talk about *they*
>
> T: Let's put both of them on the board. *This* is the appropriate one. *It* would be referring to one thing—a pronoun replacing a noun. So, what does *this* refer to then?
>
> S2: Situation
>
> T: The whole situation. So, this is the kind of simple explanation. It can be more complicated than this. Does that help? Okay? So, the use of it is a bit different here, but we won't talk about that now. [Observation 15]

In the above, the teacher was prepared for the students' questions about referential pronouns and provided some examples from which students could understand the answer. She later commented on this episode,

> They are always having problems with *this* and *it.* It seems to be something that somehow isn't learned along the way. I've quite often (taught) it like that. [Interview 3]

She had invited her students to ask questions and when they did, she was prepared (similar to the 'bag of [teaching] tricks' reported in Bailey, 1996). Sandra's past experiences teaching both the course and the students had provided her with confidence and readiness in handling student-initiated questions. Sandra's sensitivity to her students was also evident in her first and final statement in the extract above. She began by announcing that this was not going to be an in-depth grammar explanation *([students] are not language specialists*) and she ended the episode noting the more complex nature of the grammar item but leaving it at that (*we won't talk about that now*). [4]

[4] [The other student-initiated FFE occurred within this activity—a question about the definite article, *the*. However, instead of providing an explanation, she referred her students to the university's online self-access grammar tool].

Example 3: Student-initiated (challenge)

The final extract occurred during a small group activity. Students were given an exercise either on voice or relative clauses. They were to finish the textbook exercises, discuss the answers as a small group, and understand the answers well enough to be able to explain them to other groups. Sandra introduced the activity with the following:

> I don't want to do basic things with you. ...This is old stuff. I don't want to spend the entire lesson going over things you already know because that is kind of boring for you. But a lot of you still have problems with the use of the passive voice and relative clauses. [Observation 8]

Here again, Sandra expresses concern for students' negative reaction to a grammar-focused exercise.

As the groups discussed their answers, Sandra walked around making herself available to answer any questions. The following occurred in one small group discussing passive, active and ergative voice. She joined one group and began by asking students to share their answers.

> Extract 8
>
> T: Let's look at this and see if you've understood the gap fill. Is it active, passive, or ergative?
>
> S1: Active
>
> T: It looks active, but it is kind of a natural process. It seems closer to a natural process. So, it's all force of gravity. It's closer to active voice with passive meaning. What do you think?
>
> S2: Active voice with passive meaning
>
> T: It's just the natural process of water. You can say that gravity makes it flow down but we really don't talk about gravity like that. Gravity has the same action on everybody. There is nothing specific about it. So, we are on the floor because of gravity... and is collected...so it is...
>
> S3: It's passive
>
> S4: I think it is ergative
>
> T: Yes. Passive voice here.
>
> [students continue to discuss]
>
> T: I've been thinking about...the gravity.
>
> S4: Should be ergative voice. Active voice passive meaning (refers to textbook example).
>
> S2: Should be passive meaning because the subject is receiver
>
> T: It should be passive, shouldn't it? <…>All of them are in past tense though, aren't they?
>
> <…>
>
> T: Actually, I think I'm wrong. It is ergative voice. You are right Sam (S4). We are just not interested in who. So, this is... I think I was wrong. It *is* ergative. There is something that makes it move...but it is a natural process. Not an identifiable agent. You're an expert now, Sam.
>
> (Teacher concludes by moving on to another group). [Observation 8]

The teacher opened this episode and continued to engage students with questions leading them to an answer. However, one student continued to challenge the teacher's answer, and, in the end, she agreed with the student and admitted to being wrong. In a sense, as the materials writer, she had more at stake, yet she did not seem too bothered about admitting her mistake and confusion on this grammar point. She later commented,

> I got it wrong. I got one of them wrong. And I thought, yea, Sam you've got it right. I've got it wrong. For people like Sam who is not very strong at writing, I'm happy to admit when I've made a mistake and given them the wrong answer. I mean I'm glad because Sam was quite insistent. It's good when they take ownership of the language because for a lot of them English is a dire thing. [Interview 2]

Sandra's comment reveals that her concern for students' success in English may have overridden any fear of being incorrect or losing face. In this small group setting, Sandra had also taken on a role of facilitator rather than an authority, creating a more evenly balanced role of the interlocutors (Nassaji, 2013) and thus likely allowing her to admit her mistake. It is also noteworthy that a weaker student persisted with his answer. Perhaps the less rigid interaction patterns found in small groups offered him more comfortable setting and bolstered his confidence to persistently disagree with the teacher (see Zhao & Bitchener, 2007; Nassaji, 2013).

5. Discussion

5.1 Teacher-Initiated

The data from Kalvin and Sandra reveal that the teacher-initiated decisions were shaped by each teachers' knowledge of the students and the course (similar to the findings of Gatbonton, 2008; Gun, 2014). Kalvin shared both an educational and a language background with his students. He used himself as an example of how they might also achieve success in the language by following his own past and on-going language learning strategies that he demonstrated during class. They worked for him; they could work for his students. Kalvin's first-hand knowledge of Chinese-English grammar also helped him anticipate and address typical and likely language problems that might come up in the course, which he had taught previously.

Sandra's experiences teaching the EAP engineering students and (second-hand) knowledge of their previous schooling resulted in her particular alertness to any negative student reactions to grammar instruction. This influenced her CF practices and was evidenced in how she carefully introduced her form-focused decisions. Intimate knowledge of the course provided Sandra with a readiness to answer student-initiated queries.

Both teachers also held a belief in presenting language in context particularly at this level of study (similar to the EAP teachers in Burgess & Etherington, 2002). This belief in contextualization was evident at least to a degree in Sandra's answer to a student's question about referential pronouns in that she provided an example, and asked questions rather than providing a rule. Kalvin used 'lack of context' for the reason one of his unplanned lessons did not go as well as he would have liked. If the item under fire had been contextualised, then maybe there would not have been a challenge and, he stated, in future he would use lack of context as his 'excuse to get out of trouble'.

Although there are many similarities in the factors undergirding the two teachers' unplanned decisions, differences are seen when the episode is student-initiated, and especially when the student is presenting a challenge to the teacher.

5.2 Student-Initiated FFE: Interpretation as Opportunities or Threats

Teacher identity

In the data for both Kalvin and Sandra student-initiated FFEs occurred within planned FFI—going over answers to a grammar exercise. Both were challenged by students' unexpected answers but interpreted these events differently. When the teacher was able to answer the query or handle the student's challenge, the episode was viewed positively as an opportunity for learning (e.g. Sandra). In this case, the image of the teaching self as a competent language instructor (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) is supported. Conversely, if the teacher was unable to handle the query or to provide an answer acceptable to the students, it was perceived negatively as a threat (e.g. Kalvin). In such cases, the teacher may perceive a loss of control of the event and/or evaluate his/her performance as 'poor' (Marcussen, 2006, p. 6) and thus a threat to the teaching self (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993).

Miller (2009) has argued that a teacher's identity is negotiated moment to moment during the lesson with students legitimatizing a teacher's identity by either by 'granting or refusing a hearing' (p. 172). The students' persistent challenge to and rejection of Kalvin's explanation could be an example of a refusal to grant such a hearing. It could be that Kalvin's identity as a knowledgeable English teacher was threatened when he wasn't able to provide an answer that satisfied his students or himself. Borg (2005) also revealed that a teacher can feel threatened if a lack of grammatical knowledge is uncovered by the students. In his study, one teacher, speculated that if he did not have the right answer his students '[would] automatically say 'what a horrible teacher'' (p. 335). Perhaps Kalvin also ascribed such negative opinions to these more 'critical' students in the episode which he later labelled an 'ambush' and 'trouble'. Kalvin's use of negative evaluative language to describe this FFE suggests that this was a more salient emotional episode. Teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 2000) with emotion, cognition, and action interconnected to teacher identity (Hargreaves 1998; Timostuk & Ugaste, 2012; Zembylas, 2003). Thus, in Kalvin's case emotion may have factored into his cognition, identity, and classroom action.

Sandra may have held a strong sense of professional expertise, which insulated her from threats to her identity. She seemed to have a 'negotiated and sustained expertise' as a language teacher, which shaped how she positioned herself in the course and in the classroom (as an authority) (Johnson, 2006 p. 247). As course coordinator and materials writer, perhaps her expertise, although challenged by an 'insistent' student, was not threatened allowing her to interpret the student-initiated FFE as an opportunity for learning rather than a threat.

There are other factors that may have contributed to the teachers' different interpretations of the student-initiated FFEs. These include the structure and context of the challenge.

The structure and context of the student-initiated FFE

The student-challenge episode in Kalvin's data was structured as an Information-Response-Feedback (IRF) exchange in which the teacher initiates the exchange and remains in charge throughout the series of turns (K. Richards, 2006; Hall & Walsh, 2002). The teacher assumes the role of expert and gatekeeper to learning opportunities (Hall & Walsh, 2002, p. 188). As a result, students' roles are limited having little space to disagree or ask questions (Van Lier, 2001, p. 95). Thus, it is significant that instead of taking up the response slot as anticipated (and agreeing with the answer) one student initiated a question and was joined by two others. In effect this created more of a 'spiral' IRF--a chain between more than one student and the teacher (Li, 2017, p. 122). In this case the authority and power of the teacher was challenged, and the students' responses deemed 'dispreferred and unexpected' (Li 2017, pp. 146-148). Thus, instead of interpreting this episode as an opportunity for learning, Kalvin found the persistent

questions disruptive resulting in a quick end of the episode and a return to the defined teacher-student roles. In Sandra's example, the episode opened with a teacher-initiated question, but her position in the small group was that of a partner rather than authority. The small group provided more freedom from the usual teacher-fronted interactions (e.g. IRF) and allowed space for students' contributions and questions (Van Lier, 2008) and in this case, disagreement with the teacher's answer.

The differences in context and degree of exposure in which the episodes occurred may also account for differences in teacher interpretation. Kalvin's unanticipated student-initiated FFE occurred in front of the entire class and as a result there was likely more at stake for him as a source of grammatical knowledge and identity as a (competent) English language teacher. He was under more pressure to provide a definitive answer. In contrast, Sandra's episode took place in a small group of four students that went unnoticed by the majority of the students. Perhaps she saw that these four students were cognitively engaged in this activity and thus she judged the student's unexpected and 'insistent' response not as a threat but as the ultimate definition of a successful activity and therefore a positive opportunity for learning.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The findings here support earlier studies that previous language learning and teaching experiences contribute to a teacher's unplanned form-focused decisions and to an uncertain degree belief about approaches to language instruction (e.g. contextualized language teaching). This study also adds to existing scant knowledge about student-initiated FFEs. Whether or not student-initiated FFEs are viewed positively as a 'contribution to learning' (Bailey, 1996, p. 19), or negatively, 'as a derailment of the lesson' (Ibid) is dependent upon the teacher. The student may begin the interaction and even pursue it, but it is the teacher who decides if this will be an opportunity for student learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) or a threat to the teaching self. The structure and context of the student-initiated FFE was also seen to contribute to the teacher's interpretation of the student-initiated event as an opportunity or threat.

Similar to other studies, the incidences of student-initiated FFEs in the data were outnumbered by occurrences of teacher-initiated FFEs (Nassaji, 2010; Poursemaeil and Gholami, 2017; Jean & Simard, 2011). Teacher-controlled interaction classroom patterns have been offered as an explanation for this imbalance, but, given the positive gains in student-initiated FFEs, this imbalance needs closer investigation. When students initiate FFEs they have identified their own learning gap (Ellis et al. 2002), are more motivated and cognitively ready to receive linguistic input (Nassaji, 2013; Williams, 2001) resulting in a significantly higher likelihood of uptake of language form with greater recall (Baskturkmen et al. 2002, p. 11), greater learning gains (Nassaji, 2010) and higher test scores (Nassaji, 2013). Could it be that our students are 'reading' us in a way that prevents them from initiating valuable Fof (e.g. Baturkmen et al. 2002) or are there other factors which are posing obstacles for more student-initiated FoF? Or could it be that we teachers need to 'take a back seat from time to time' (Li, 2017, pp. 167-168), relinquish the teacher-dominated classroom (Garton, 2012) and provide students with more learning spaces (Walsh & Li, 2013)? What cognitions might prevent the implementation of such adjustments? These are questions yet to be answered.

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