Developing the relational in teacher feedback literacy: Exploring feedback talk

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The higher education literature on feedback has generally explored spoken feedback delivered on a summative written assignment. In contrast, this study explores spoken feedback as part of the teacher – student dialogue in classroom interaction (i.e. feedback talk). Drawing on a discourse analysis approach we identified linguistic and rhetorical indicators of *feedback talk* and found a number of common patterns in six seminar events. Interviews with two teachers revealed a perception that feedback was an inherent part of the teaching and learning process and the significance of feedback talk in supporting relationships. We argue that a recognition and understanding of feedback talk can support the relational dimension of feedback literacy in the micro-moments of learning and teaching. We frame our discussion of feedback talk and teacher feedback literacy within the wider context of learning and teaching and call for a more holistic perspective on feedback.

Keywords: *feedback talk; teacher feedback literacy; feedback; relational dimension; discourse analysis*

Introduction

In this paper we explore feedback talk and teacher feedback literacy within the wider context of teaching and learning. We use the term *feedback talk* to distinguish it from verbal feedback which often refers to spoken feedback delivered on a summative written assignment (Agricola et al, 2020). For us, feedback talk is part of the contingent, episodic and dialogic interaction between students and teachers in the classroom

Our proposition is that feedback cannot be studied in isolation from its '*complex interrelations with other aspects of the learning environment*' and that we need to *''recognise the diversity of situated feedback interactions*' (Gravett 2020, 9). Furthermore, we argue that the concept of feedback be extended beyond current notions of dialogic feedback – defined as '*exchanges in which interpretations are shared, meanings negotiated and expectations clarified*' (Carless 2013, 90), to recognise the dialogic interactions between teachers and students which probe, question and clarify meanings to support learning and which take place in moment-by-moment exchanges in the classroom. Studies on spoken feedback have found that students do not always recognise feedback (Medland 2019) and students and teachers may disagree on what constitutes feedback (Van Der Kleij and Adie 2020). Previous studies which aimed to identify feedback talk through coding frameworks have made some contribution to this understanding (Johnson et al, 2016; Steen-Utheim and Wittek 2017; Adie et al, 2018) yet these studies focused on the feedback stage of the lesson. We suggest that an exploration of feedback talk be situated in the classroom dialogue in its entirety and that an understanding of this classroom interaction in practice is essential to developing teacher feedback literacy (Carless and Winstone 2020). Despite the learning potential from classroom talk, feedback talk has been little studied in the research literature (Van Der Kleij and Adie 2020), and even less so in the higher education context.

In this paper we focus on the feedback talk in a seminar context. Higher education seminars aim to be a site of inquiry and are broadly defined here as a discipline-specific small group learning event that aims to explore ideas through interaction (Shaw, Carey, and Mair 2008). A key purpose of seminars is to provide students with the opportunity to discuss, challenge, hypothesize and co-construct understanding, and to '*foster criticality and promote individualised thinking*' (O'Keeffe and Walsh 2010, 154). Feedback talk from the teacher is arguably a key feature of this dialogic interaction (Adie et al. 2018).

The contribution of this exploratory study is to identify what feedback talk looks like in the wider context of teaching and learning and to surface the role of feedback talk in developing classroom relationships. A more fine-grained understanding of feedback talk can support the development of teacher feedback literacy.

Literature review

The nature of feedback

It is axiomatic to assert that feedback is fundamental to learning. Indeed, the potential benefits of feedback identified in the literature are compelling. Yet the *'practical failure'* (O'Donovan et al. 2016, 945) of current tertiary pedagogy has resulted in feedback being described as *'not fit for purpose'* (Carless et al. 2011, 395) and an area of concern internationally (Nicol 2010; Medland 2016). The stubborn sector-wide misconception that only post-assessment written comments constitute feedback

(Winstone and Pitt 2017) has been detrimental to understandings of what can in some cases be the richest, most abundant form of feedback available - the feedback talk permeating taught sessions (Black and McCormick 2010).

Much greater emphasis has been placed on the role of classroom dialogue as feedback in research in the context of school education (e.g., Gamlem and Smith 2013; Kerr 2017) than in higher education. In the latter context, research on verbal feedback generally refers to spoken feedback provided on a summative assessment task (e.g., Blair and McGinty 2013; Agricola, Prins, and Sluijsmans 2020), rather than on feedback talk in the context of teaching environments. This relative dearth of research on feedback talk in higher education contexts is surprising given definitions of feedback as *'all dialogue to support learning in both formal and informal situations'* (Carless et al. 2011, 396).

Teacher feedback literacy

Within the recent literature, there has been a growing appreciation of the roles of both teachers and students in facilitating effective feedback processes, as represented by the parallel concepts of student feedback literacy (Carless and Boud 2018) and teacher feedback literacy (Carless and Winstone 2020). Student feedback literacy is defined as an *'understanding of what feedback is and how it can be managed effectively; capacities and dispositions to make productive use of feedback; and appreciation of the roles of teachers and themselves in these processes'* (Carless and Boud 2018, 1316). An important dimension of student feedback literacy is appreciating feedback and being able to recognise that feedback comes in many forms, not just written comments on

completed tasks (Carless and Boud 2018). Students often report that verbal feedback on assessments is more useful than written comments (e.g., Agricola, Prins, and Sluijsmans 2020); this may stem in part from the fact that in a verbal feedback exchange it is easier to clarify misunderstandings and seek further elaboration on comments. In the classroom context, this affordance is also present.

In parallel to student feedback literacy, teacher feedback literacy is defined as the *'knowledge, expertise and dispositions to design feedback processes in ways which enable student uptake of feedback'* (Carless and Winstone 2020, 4). Teacher feedback literacy is described by Carless and Winstone as constituting a design dimension, a relational dimension, and a pragmatic dimension. The design dimension draws attention to the role of teachers in creating opportunities for students to use feedback to improve their skills or understanding. Whilst feedback talk is not discussed explicitly, Carless and Winstone (2020, 5) refer to the importance of *'timely guidance and intrinsic feedback to make expectations clear and avoid the problem of post-task feedback coming too late for student uptake'*. Given that feedback on assessment tasks can often occur towards the end of modules or units where there are fewer opportunities for students to enact the advice, there is a clear contrast with the benefits of immediate, in-the-moment feedback talk that takes place during teaching.

The relational and pragmatic dimensions of teacher feedback literacy are also pertinent to the importance of classroom feedback talk. Teachers can use their relational sensitivities to '*show supportiveness, approachability and sensitivity in how feedback is shared*' (Carless and Winstone 2020, 6). Where feedback within the classroom context is public rather than private, these sensitivities are an important part of facilitating effective feedback in the classroom. Pragmatic concerns are also important; Carless and Winstone (2020) draw attention to the importance of teachers managing the workload

demands of feedback in ways that seek to repurpose time expended on these activities to maximise their impact. In this paper we claim that teacher feedback literacy can be developed through raising awareness of both the rhetorical and linguistic realisations of feedback talk as well as its role in developing teacher-student relationships in the micro-moments of classroom talk. These feedback interactions may not otherwise be recognised or understood as part of the dialogue of learning and teaching (Medland 2019).

Given the wider context of teaching and learning (Gravett 2020), there is an important role within student feedback literacy for recognising the multitude of forms of feedback interactions. There is also an important role within teacher feedback literacy for creating opportunities for students to use feedback information within supportive environments that maximise the impact of feedback. However, if teachers are to facilitate effective feedback interactions in classroom contexts, and students are to use such opportunities to develop their learning, greater awareness of the nature and process of feedback talk is needed. Carless and Winstone (2020) argue for an interplay between student and teacher feedback literacy, where teachers can use their understandings of feedback to support the development of feedback literacy within their students. Whilst there is some evidence that teachers do recognise that an important role of feedback is not just to help a student to improve their work, but also their understanding of key concepts and course content (Dawson et al. 2019), we still know very little about what feedback talk looks like, let alone how to facilitate effective interactions in this context. This study aimed to answer the following two questions:

1. What are the linguistic and rhetorical features of feedback talk?
2. How do teachers recognise and understand feedback talk?

Methods

Participants

Six teachers from social science and humanities disciplines with a range of experience agreed to take part in the study. A summary of participants' information is provided in Table 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Data

Data were gathered from six seminar events from a variety of disciplines (see Table 1). Each seminar was audio recorded and observed by Author 1. During the observation the author took notes regarding seating arrangements, materials and other semiotic resources. Each seminar recording lasted 60 minutes. These audio recordings were then transcribed verbatim (Rapley 2007) to ensure ease of access and reading.

For the second stage of the research, Author 1 interviewed two teachers from this group. The interviews were semi-structured around questions derived from the analysis of the six seminar transcripts (See Table 2).

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Interviews were held with Teacher C and Teacher F. These two teachers were chosen as they represented two distinct disciplinary and experiential backgrounds. The interviews lasted 23.53 minutes and 28.21 minutes respectively. The interviews were recorded on Zoom and the automated transcript was subsequently checked for accuracy. During the interviews both researcher and participant had access to their seminar

transcript. The purpose of using the transcript was to focus attention on the feedback talk within the context of the entire session. The transcripts acted as a '*thinking device*' (Wertsch 2000, 24) and a catalyst for reflection (Engin 2015). The researcher asked open questions about the chosen extracts by inviting reflection on the exchanges with respect to how the teacher provided feedback and how the students responded. The researcher also asked for responses to the coding framework.

The small size of the data set from the interviews means we cannot generalise from the findings. However, since this study is exploratory in nature, our purpose was to provide qualitative in-depth data exploring understandings and perspectives of feedback talk in situ.

Analysis

Discourse analysis

The seminar transcripts were analysed using a discourse analytic approach and coded using *a priori* categories derived from Hardman (2016). In her coding framework Hardman (2016) uses the basic interaction exchange: Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). Our study was concerned with the third move in this exchange, that of the F-move, and so we initially used Hardman's (2016) F-move codes for our analysis (see Table 2 for a description of Hardman's framework). Although Hardman (2016) developed the coding from a lecture context, we felt that the various F-moves identified could be translated to seminar events. All authors coded one transcript with reference to Hardman's (2016) codes and then checked for similarity. During the analysis and discussion, the initial codes were broken down and we developed further *a posteriori* codes to identify more nuanced feedback talk.

Despite variability in linguistic realisations and certain idiosyncrasies across participants ('teacher ticks'), we found indications of systematic patterning of feedback talk which contributed to the dialogic interaction in the seminar talk. The analysis of the discourse was rooted in the unfolding dialogue, and as such identification of feedback talk was contingent on students' responses. We found that feedback exchanges consisting of (but not limited to) affirming, consolidating, validating, elaborating and initiating are required for dialogic feedback to be enacted in the seminar talk. The codes reflected three over-arching purposes of feedback: i. providing information and validation; ii. information giving, and; iii. questioning. These three purposes contribute to developing relationships in the classroom through support, appraisal, constructive and honest feedback as well as encouraging students to continue their discussions. These features specifically link to the relational dimension of feedback literacy (Carless and Winstone 2020). The analysis resulted in the final coding framework (see Table 3) which all authors then used to code the remaining five transcripts. We also performed a quantitative analysis of the coding patterns to provide further insight into how feedback talk operates at the level of classroom discourse. We present these findings below.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Thematic analysis

We conducted thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. This was an iterative reading and re-reading of the transcripts with the research questions guiding the inductive process of allocating semantic themes. In consultation, all authors agreed on the final two main themes demonstrating the relational dimension of feedback literacy, in particular, with respect to the centrality of the teacher – student relationship. The two themes were: *Feedback talk as dialogue and feedback talk as teaching.*

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the University's Ethics committee. For the first stage of the study, teachers and students gave their informed consent to the audio recordings. In the second stage of the study, the two teachers provided informed consent to the interviews. All identifying information was redacted from the interview transcripts. The first author was familiar with both teachers, working closely with one of them. This may have influenced the interview data and analysis due to shared understanding of the teaching context and an already established rapport (Garton and Copland 2010). To mitigate possible prejudices in the data analysis the three other authors verified the themes.

Findings

Feedback talk

Our first research question was to identify indicators of feedback talk. Table 4 illustrates the 10 indicators of feedback talk identified in the data.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The frequency of codes across the six transcripts are presented in Figure 1 below:

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The figure highlights the spread of codes across all transcripts, with affirmation, consolidation and elaboration occurring most commonly. Affirmation and consolidation speak strongly to a relational purpose.

Codes were not isolated speech acts but mostly evident in patterns (See Table 5). The most prevalent patterns all started with affirming, followed by either elaborate (in two-part exchanges) and consolidate and probe (in three-part exchanges).
These common patterns suggest that the teacher responds to students to either expand on the idea themselves, or to invite / encourage the student to expand further.

[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

We demonstrate the most common two-part pattern *Affirm – Elaborate* in extract 1 below.

Extract 1: Tourism

1	S:	Recognition is very important. Continue to recognize who brings the
2		[inaudible] and who experiences satisfaction. It can be a family member,
3		it can be a company, it can be [inaudible].
4	T:	Exactly. So it goes to support, as she said, that it goes beyond just doling
5		out loyalty cards and then just putting together loyalty programs.
6		Recognition is a very important aspect of trying to build loyalty. Any
7		other view you might want to share?

In the extract above, the student responds to an earlier question (lines 1-3). In line 4, the teacher makes an affirmation, *'exactly'*, then elaborates on the students' answer, '*so it goes...*' (lines 4-6). The teacher uses the student's response as a springboard for further details about how a loyalty programme works in the tourism industry. The question –

answer routine then continues in line 6-7 when the teacher initiates further responses from other students, '*Any other view you might want to share*?'

We exemplify the most common three-part pattern *Affirm – Consolidate – Probe* in extract 2 below:

Extract 2: Qualitative methods

1	S:	Try to find a subject that's interesting to that person?
2	T:	Yes, so you might think one of the people might have something to say on
3		one of the particular topics. What about body language? How might you use
4		that?

In the extract above, the student responds to an earlier question (line 1). In line 2, the teacher affirms with '*yes'*, followed by consolidation '*so you might think one of the people*'…which is paraphrasing the student's comment, and then in line 3 the teacher probes further with '*what about body language?*'.

Teachers' perceptions of feedback talk

Our second research question explored how teachers recognised and understand feedback talk as a fundamental first step in developing teacher feedback literacy. In the following sections we discuss the alignment between our coding framework, teachers' perceptions of what feedback talk looks like and their developing understanding of feedback, particularly with respect to the relational dimension. We present these under the two broad themes we found in our interview data: *feedback talk as dialogue* and *feedback talk as teaching*. In the commentary the participants from the interviews are referred to as Teacher C (TC) and Teacher F (TF).

Feedback talk as dialogue

One theme in differentiating feedback talk from written feedback was its dialogic nature. This was echoed by both participants throughout the interviews. TF sees feedback talk as part of the larger learning conversation and emphasises that this makes it more dialogic than written feedback: *'it gives me an understanding that the verbal conversation, it is certainly much more dialogic in the sense of the verbal'. (TF)*

An opportunity for dialogue makes feedback talk part of the teaching and learning conversation and brings about many advantages due to its contingent and real time features. Teacher C below discusses how the interaction between teacher and student and the communicative nature of feedback talk can support the teacher – student relationship by providing opportunities for questions and potentially avoid misunderstandings:

> *For me, has the same element of how is the person hearing this going to receive it. So I still try to be considered in the words that I'm using, and saying things but it's much more ad hoc and you can't curate it, you can say something and then 'Oh I didn't mean it quite like that. And I guess the difference is, if it's a verbal interaction, you can correct yourself. The student has the opportunity to ask more questions. So it can become a dialogue, there's room for more interaction in how the feedback is received and interpreted and, of course, it can still be received and interpreted in a way you didn't intend, but there's room for that to and fro. (TC)*

The contingent nature of feedback talk allows for the meaning to be co-constructed between teacher and student as well as for the meaning to be contextualised. TF acknowledges this in explaining the differences between written and spoken feedback:

> *...whereas verbally it can happen in the moment. And I think that's hugely valuable in that the meaning that that statement is within that same context rather than lost over time. (TF)*

The relational dimension of teacher feedback literacy encompasses an understanding of the affective impact of feedback and how it can be perceived by the student. With

written feedback there are limitations as to how to mitigate any negative or unexpected response, such as misunderstandings as they tend to be monologic, yet, as pointed out by TC above, feedback talk can address misinterpretations at the time they occur. TF further elaborates on the pragmatic advantages of feedback talk and its contingent nature in the interaction.

> *But, of course, in a dialogue and in verbal interaction, you can pick up clues that I've no idea, you know whether that person is upset by what I've just said, or puzzled by it, or pleased or whatever, you know. And I guess I might read those wrong sometimes, but I got more chance. (TF)*

The data above point to the utility of focusing on authentic classroom dialogue to recognise the relational aspects of feedback talk, a crucial step in developing teacher feedback literacy.

Feedback talk as teaching

Both teachers highlighted that feedback talk and teaching are inextricably linked, indeed, are part of the same process. In the lesson transcripts, feedback talk reflected both encouragement and acknowledgement of the affective dimensions of teaching, as well as the more cognitive purposes of teaching, i.e. critical thinking. Similarly, the codes identify feedback talk which aims to support and encourage (e.g. affirming, praising) as well as stimulate questioning and criticality (e.g. probing, initiating, elaborating).

TC below acknowledges that feedback talk can both encourage and support student participation This recognition of the purposes of feedback talk reflects the relational dimension of feedback literacy as well as the design dimension with a focus on opportunities for correction.

> *...there's two elements to it isn't there. So one is the student has been brave enough to put their voice out there. I think giving that encouragement and saying, Yes, you were right. Or yes, you were partially right. (TC)*

As we highlight in our coding framework, and the two extracts in the previous section, classroom talk which supports construction of understanding and development of critical thinking involves asking students to elaborate, justify and provide reasoning. These are all key skills required in a higher education context. The cognitive purpose of feedback talk was prevalent in the analysis. Teachers spoke about how they used feedback to encourage further ideas or ask students to elaborate on their ideas. For example, TF uses the word *'provoke'* to 'stimulate' students' thinking aloud. TF interprets the classroom interactions as key to supporting thinking and reflection and views feedback as something that happens after, rather than during, a process. We will turn to this theme further on in the paper.

> *I mean, I'm not sure I'd call it feedback, as I say, because I say, you know, that's almost retrospective to me. It's about the dialogue of actually getting them to think. And there's some it's trying to get them whatever word you use, reflective about the things they read, seen or watched or been thinking about. And actually to provoke them does not in that sense, because in the classroom talk about it and stimulate them to verbalise. (TF)*

Similarly, teachers spoke of having a teaching 'opportunity', that is, where they could take up what a student has said and elaborate. This points to the design dimension of feedback literacy in recognition of the need to create opportunities for students to use the feedback to improve their understanding. The teaching moment is contextualised in the broader classroom dialogue and likely to be more meaningful:

> *It's building on and perhaps highlighting to them something they haven't thought about that's related. And of course, I don't know. They haven't thought about it. They just haven't expanded on it, perhaps. (TC)*

This recognition of feedback talk as offering opportunities either by probing students, or by teachers elaborating on the student responses and providing input at a crucial and timely moment point to a more holistic picture of teaching, learning and feedback. Dichotomous concepts of teaching and learning with feedback positioned as distinct from the processes of teaching and learning are not reflected in authentic, moment-by-moment classroom interaction with its affordances for contingency and timely dialogue. As TC succinctly states:

> *[..] if what we're trying to say is that feedback include opportunities to expand learning, improve for the future, that kind of thing. And I'm trying to think, why wouldn't that be feedback. (TC)*

As noted above, the terminology used to frame feedback as separate from teaching and learning is also not helpful. Feedback becomes divorced from the processes inherent in the classroom talk. TF makes this point:

> I *think, I think there's a danger in calling it feedback, because I think that delineates in most people or it narrows in most people. They will see feedback in the same way we criticise or we worry that students don't see it unless it's a formal thing and it's only ever about retrospective. What have I said or done? (TF)*

The holistic nature of feedback is summed up by TF: *but in a broader term then all of that teaching approach could be seen, as, you know, it is feedback in, in one way. (TF)*

To summarise, the feedback talk as evidenced in the seminar transcripts fulfil three purposes; encouraging participation, questioning and informing. The qualitative data from the two interviews provide insights into teachers' understandings of feedback talk and its role in developing classroom relationships. Taken together, the findings point to the key role of dialogic feedback talk in developing students' understandings in

seminar contexts, but also, significantly, in establishing and maintaining a supportive and encouraging classroom environment. Recognition of this is fundamental to teacher feedback literacy.

Discussion and conclusion

This study set out to answer the following two questions:

1. What are the linguistic and rhetorical features of feedback talk?
2. How do teachers recognise and understand feedback talk?

Firstly, our analysis of authentic classroom talk has informed a framework which reflects the linguistic and rhetorical features of feedback talk. The codes identified from the transcripts encompass a number of rhetorical moves, such as elaboration, probing and consolidation, all typically associated with 'teaching', and which provide '*timely guidance*' (Carless and Winstone 2020). Similarly, relational sensitivities are demonstrated in the ways teachers praise, affirm and consolidate. Although arguably reducing feedback talk into codes risks losing its rich and dialogic nature, it is one way to bring understandings of feedback talk to the fore, to support an understanding of what feedback is (Carless and Boud 2018) and to provide a first step in supporting teacher reflection (Hardman, 2016)

Teachers viewed feedback talk as dialogic (Steen-Utheim and Wittek 2017) and part of the classroom processes in which students and teachers work together (Carless 2015). The codes demonstrate that feedback involves so much more than correcting, negating, retrospection and providing direction for improvement. The framework taken as a whole shows the range of follow up moves such as elaborating and asking for justification which would not typically be considered feedback and yet are a central part

of the dialogue and the processes of teaching and learning and evident in the classroom talk. Similarly, the most common purpose of feedback talk is affirmation, again demonstrating the centrality of the teacher-student relationship in learning.

Supporting teacher feedback literacy is a pre-requisite for developing student feedback literacy (Carless and Boud 2018) as it *'facilitates the development of student feedback literacy when teachers deploy their skills and capacities to set up the conditions for students to appreciate and use feedback'* (Carless & Winstone 2020, 2). If students are to benefit from dialogic feedback in classroom contexts, teachers need to ensure that students know what feedback looks like, to recognise its linguistic identifiers, and how it is intended to help them as they develop their understandings and skills in these contexts. This links to the appreciating feedback (in all its forms) component of student feedback literacy (Carless and Boud 2018). The interviews revealed a developing feedback literacy with teachers reflecting relational and design dimensions in their discussion. Teachers highlighted how feedback talk can support relationships through clarifying meaning in the moment and avoiding misunderstandings. Feedback talk can also encourage and motivate through praise and affirmation. Similarly, teachers recognised how feedback talk provides opportunities for students to improve their work and deepen disciplinary understanding through follow-up moves such as elaborating and probing.

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this study is to argue for a reframing of feedback as a natural and contingent part of the teaching and learning process. In removing the artificial linguistic boundaries surrounding feedback, teaching and learning, we emancipate ourselves from the confines of the requirement to distinguish what are fundamentally fused acts. Leading scholars have called for a conceptual shift from feedback as a transmission of information from teacher to student,

towards a dialogic process in which students are partners (Carless 2015). In essence, this alters feedback from a product to a process. However, it is our assertion that this shift from an old (i.e., product) to new (i.e., process) paradigm of feedback is only the first step in the ontological re-examination of the arguably artificial relationship that has been created between teaching, learning and feedback. In other words, the very act of ascribing the label of 'feedback' to this verbal interaction, is by its very nature enforcing its separation and segregation from the acts of teaching and learning. What is required is a breakdown of the artificial boundaries between assessment, learning and teaching. Instead, rather than viewing feedback as fundamental to the teaching-learning relationship and linked only to assessment, we argue that feedback *is* teaching and learning, and vice versa, both in the presence and absence of assessment.

Therefore, to be truly feedback literate, one must transcend these linguistic shackles (including, perhaps, the label of feedback literacy) in order to illuminate the ephemeral interactions that result in learning, whether written, verbal, comparative or otherwise. Central to this re-imagining is dialogic partnerships between students and teachers in the learning process that act as instruments for thinking, fostering inclusivity and community (Heron 2018), and providing space for the development of shared understanding (Medland 2019). Inherent in these instruments are autonomy, critical thinking and self-regulation (Winstone and Pitt 2017; Jorre de St Jorre and Oliver 2018), as well as the development of one's internal 'feedback' (Nicol 2020).

Limitations of the study

This study was limited by the absence of the students' voice. As earlier studies have noted, students often do not recognise spoken feedback in the classroom context (Medland 2019) and so further research with students exploring the feedback talk codes

would surface the student perspective and students' understanding of feedback talk. Secondly, the scope of this study is limited in that only two teachers were interviewed. However, since this was an exploratory study of feedback talk, the interviews served to provide the teacher perspective on feedback talk in classroom interaction through responses to the codes and authentic classroom transcripts. Going forward, the authors plan to build on this initial data to develop a larger study drawing on a larger number of teachers from across the disciplines, as well as students.

Conclusion and implications

We argue in this paper that for teachers to develop their feedback literacy they need to be aware of what feedback talk looks like. This can be achieved through reflection on practice. However, we emphasise that for reflection to be systematic and rigorous it needs to be evidence-based and data-led (Mann and Walsh 2013; Walsh and Mann 2015). A data-led approach uses authentic data as the stimulus for reflection, and, in the context of feedback, provides a springboard for discussion and opening up of feedback practices. In the interviews, the two teachers were able to use the transcripts and codes to identify where they were able to create opportunities for students to develop further understanding, and how they (both teachers and students) did this in a way which showed sensitivity in language choices. The use of artefacts in the form of transcripts and a coding framework revealed the power of data and evidence to stimulate discussion around the nature and indicators of feedback talk.

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Table 1. Participant Details

Teacher	**Number of years' experience**	**Discipline**
A	1 semester	Tourism Management
B	1 Semester	Sociology
C	1 Semester	Health Psychology
D	3 years	Accounting
E	25+ years	Applied Linguistics
F	25+ years	Liberal Arts

Table 2. Interview questions

1. What do you understand by the term feedback?
2. Are there any differences between written and spoken feedback?
3. Can you look at the transcript from your lesson and tell me where you are giving feedback?
4. How do the students respond?
5. Why do you choose that as an example of feedback?
6. What would you say is the purpose of that feedback?

7. In our research we found the following codes to describe feedback. Can you find any examples of these in your transcript, and how do students respond?
    1. Requesting clarification
    2. Probing (seeking further details)
    3. Consolidating (reiterating/playing back a student's response)
    4. Validating (acknowledging student input, e.g. 'thank you')
    5. Elaborating (building on a student's response, could include giving an example)
    6. Praising
    7. Initiating (inviting others to speak)
    8. Correcting
    9. Negating (e.g. no)
    10. Affirming (e.g. yes, exactly)

8. As a result of this interview, have your ideas on verbal feedback changed in any way?

Table 3. Codes taken from Hardman's (2016) framework: Follow-up moves

Acknowledge (Ack)	Tutor verbally acknowledges, repeats and/or accepts a student's answer (e.g., repeat answer, 'yeah', 'ok')
Praise (Prai)	Tutor praises a student's answer (e.g., 'good', 'excellent', 'brilliant')
Negate (Neg)	Tutor rejects a student's answer (e.g., 'no', 'not quite', 'not really')
Comment (Com)	Tutor builds on, elaborates or transforms a student's answer
Probe (Prob)	Tutor stays with the same student and asks to explain, clarify and/or justify student thinking (e.g., 'can you be more specific', 'can you say more about that', 'Why do you think that'?)
Uptake (Upt)	Tutor incorporates a student's answer into a subsequent question (e.g., 'Do you agree/disagree and why?' 'Who can add onto that Idea?' 'Does anyone want to respond to that idea?' 'What do you understand better as a result of today's discussion?' 'What might happen if … ?')

Table 4. Indicators of feedback talk

		Providing confirmation and validation
1	Validating	Acknowledging student input, e.g., *thank you*
2	Praising	Praising a response, e.g., *That's great*
3	Affirming	Showing agreement with a response, e.g., *yes, exactly*
		Information giving
4	Consolidating	Repeating /playing back a student's response, e.g., *S: Number eight is strong* *T: Number eight is very strong*
5	Elaborating	Building on a student's response, could include giving an example, e.g., *So what we are saying here is...*
6	Correcting	Providing a correct answer, e.g., *Well at this stage they haven't actually done the courses.*
7	Negating	Rejecting an answer, e.g., *No*
		Questioning
8	Requesting clarification	Checking understanding of the student's comment, e.g., *Sorry*?
9	Probing	Seeking further details e.g., *why do you think that?*

10	Initiating	Inviting others to speak, e.g., Would *anyone like to comment?*

Table 5: Common patterns.

Moves	Pattern	Frequency across the data
Two moves	Affirm – Elaborate	16
	Affirm – Consolidate	13
	Affirm – Initiate	10
	Affirm - Probe	7
Three moves	Affirm – Consolidate – Probe	6
	Affirm – Consolidate – Elaborate	6
	Affirm – Consolidate - Initiate	5

Figure 1: Frequency of codes across transcripts.