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The effectiveness of teacher's verbal feedback in managing primary classrooms

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The effectiveness of teacher's verbal feedback
in managing primary classrooms

Abstract:

This dissertation examines the effectiveness of teacher's verbal feedback in managing primary classrooms in Hong Kong. Classroom observations and in-depth interviews were conducted to investigate the use, impacts, and effectiveness of teacher's verbal feedback in managing student's classroom behavior. All paticipants of this study are Hong Kong in-service teachers and they expressed their perceptions on using verbal feedback to manage their classrooms. The findings of this study reveal that the participants tended to use general praise to reinforce good classroom behavior whereas leave requests were never adopted to intervene in student's behavior in classrooms which possibly due to cultural factor, teachers' perceptions on negative verbal feedback and parenting style of Hong Kong parents. Hong Kong teachers are recommended to increase their awareness on the strategies of using verbal feedback to manage their classrooms. The elements of teacher professional development should be evaluated and to become more holistic and comprehensive.

1. Introduction

Classroom management is an important issue in primary classrooms. Hue & Li (2008) pointed out that effective classroom management is a crucial factor for teachers to create a positive classroom environment, where positive interpersonal interaction is promoted among teachers and students and classroom learning is facilitated through significant classroom management. Verbal feedback given by teachers is a direct and frequently used strategy to manage students' classroom behaviours which creates either positive or negative teacher-student interaction. Therefore, there is a necessity and significance to investigate which types of verbal feedback are effective to manage classrooms in Hong Kong context, especially managing students' classroom behaviors in order to provide

prospective or in-service teachers with some insights regarding the types of effective verbal feedback could be used to manage students' classroom behavior in their classrooms. Qualitative research methods, including classroom observations and semi-structured interviews are adopted to investigate what verbal feedback the teachers used to manage students' behaviors during lessons and to evaluate the effects and the effectiveness of both positive and negative feedback to manage students' classroom behaviors.

1.1 Research questions:

Based on the objectives mentioned above, three research questions were addressed and they are listed as follows:

1. What verbal feedback do teachers use to manage students' behaviors during lessons?

2. How do both positive and negative verbal feedback affect classroom management?

3. To what extent does teacher verbal feedback significantly manage students' behaviour in classrooms?

This study adopted two instruments (see Section 3, p. 7) to investigate three research questions mentioned above.

2. **Literature Review**

In this section, a selection of previous literature regarding students' classroom behaviors and verbal feedback given by teachers are selected to review and analyze, possible research gaps are also mentioned in the following.

2.1 The interrelationship of students' motivations, classroom behaviors and teacher's' interventions

Students' behavior can be affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, according to Deci & Ryan (1975), an intrinsically motivated behavior refers to the behavior of oneself that cannot be attributed to external controls or recognizable rewards while an extrinsically motivated behavior refers the behavior of oneself is controlled by the external stimuli. For instance, if students are well-behave without any rewards or praise given by the teachers, they are affected by their intrinsic motivation to be self-disciplined. In contrast, if the teachers establish a reward system or use different kinds of verbal feedback to manage students' behaviors in classrooms, students may behave because of the external reinforcers, including rewards and teachers' verbal feedback which they are extrinsically motivated to behave.

2.2 Definition of positive and negative verbal feedback

With reference to Hattie & Timperley (2007), they suggested that each feedback questions works at four levels including task level, process level, self-regulation level and self-level. Self-regulation level is closely related to classroom management as this level involves students' self-management and self-monitoring processes which represent students' classroom behaviors. If students can cognitively engage in the self-assessment process, they can manage and monitor their classroom behaviors by themselves. Therefore, feedback given by teachers can affect students in various aspects. For instance, teachers' feedback can cultivate students with the skills of self-assessment in relation to the appropriateness of their behaviors. On the other hand, managing students' behaviors can also facilitate their learning as the lesson are not interrupted by students' challenging behaviors and hence all of them can pay attention in class.

According to Burnett & Mandel (2010), the small scale qualitative study is conducted to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of praise and feedback in classrooms by making structured interviews and classroom observation. In the study conducted by Burnett & Mandel in 2010, four types of feedback given by teachers are observed, including general praise, negative statement, ability

praise and effort praise. Regarding the percentage of total observations, 77% of feedback used by teachers are general praise which are non-concrete positive feedback such as "Well done", "Lovely work", while 11% are negative statements which are negative feedback such as "That's very untidy work". In addition, 6% of feedback used by teachers are ability praise which are compliment with regard to students' abilities and skills, such as "You have the skills to be good in Maths" while 6% are effort praise which showed admiration on efforts paid by students like "You've been working hard", "You are a hard worker in reading", etc. Burnett & Mandel (2010) recommended that teachers should use less general and non-targeted praise in classrooms whereas they should use more ability feedback for younger students (grades 1-4) and more effort feedback for older students (grades 5-7). As illustrated by Burnett & Mandel (2010), although both effort and ability feedback seem more effective, they also have strengths and limitations. Therefore, teachers should carefully consider how they use different kinds of positive feedback to manage students' classroom behavior by evaluating the unique situation in their classrooms.

Based on the definition of positive feedback suggested by Burnett & Mandel (2010), positive feedback includes ability praise, effort praise and general praise. In contrast, with reference to Nelson and Roberts (2000), negative feedback includes reprimands, ultimatums, consequences and leave requests. *Reprimands* refers to the command that the teacher asked the student to stop misbehavior immediately, for example "Stop hitting", etc while *ultimatums* notice the student would encounter a possible cost if they continue to misbehave, for instance, the teacher would say "If you don't stop...then I will...". In addition, *consequences* refer to the target student would receive a designated consequence from teachers, for example, loss of a privilege like the student would stay with the teacher during recess. Furthermore, a *leave request* refers to the request that the student is asked to leave the classroom due to the misbehavior, for example, the student is asked to leave the classroom and go to the principal's office.

2.3 The effectiveness and limitations of positive feedback in managing students' behaviors

As with any potential classroom reinforcer, praise can improve student academic or behavioral performance—but only if the student finds it reinforcing (Akin-Little et al., 2004). In classrooms, positive feedback and praise are commonly used by teachers to encourage and motivate students to behave properly and conduct appropriate behaviors in classrooms. However, some students who do not treasure praise from teachers are also found in classrooms, so praise might not be effective to shape every student's behaviors. Therefore, some teachers would also use negative feedback to intervene in students' challenging behaviors. Regarding students' behaviors, most of the primary schools in Hong Kong have developed their own school rules and class rules to get students to know teachers' expectations of their behaviors and praise is also used by teachers to encourage students to achieve that. The power of praise in changing student behavior is that it both indicates teacher approval and informs the student about how the praised academic performance or behavior conforms to teachers' expectations (Burnett, 2001). If teachers praise students frequently with regard to the appropriate behavior they conducted, all the students would familiarize themselves with teachers' expectations which also keep students in mind that how they should behave in class.

2.4 The research gaps between the previous research and this study

In this study, the first research question is addressed by the observation scheme (Appendix 1, p. 38) by making references to the literature mentioned in Section 2.2 (p. 4), including the definition of positive feedback suggested in the study of Burnett & Mandel (2010) and the definition of negative feedback suggested in the study of Nelson and Roberts (2000). In reference to Section 2.2 (p. 4), the study conducted by Burnett & Mandel (2010) investigated the Australian context instead of Hong Kong context. As Australia and Hong Kong have different cultures, the research results might be very diverse. Therefore, this study aims to fill in this research gap by investigating three research questions in Hong Kong context.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Nie & Lau (2009) shows that care, love and respect given by teachers could cater for students' needs and engage them in learning. However, at the same time, teacher's interventions are also significant to manage students' misbehavior. The most important point is how teachers strike a balance between these two kinds of measures. The findings shown in Nie & Lau (2009) reveal the common approach of classroom management adopted by Singaporean teachers. Singaporean teachers usually adopt both positive and negative measures to manage students' behaviors. This leads to another research gap that whether Hong Kong teachers adopt the same approach which both positive and negative feedback are used in Hong Kong primary classrooms. In this study, this research gap was filled by investigating the frequency of positive and negative feedback used by Hong Kong in-service teachers and evaluating how both positive and negative feedback given by teachers affected students' classroom behaviors in Hong Kong.

3. Research methodology

This section illustrates the methodology of this study, including the context and participants, instruments and data analysis.

3.1 Context and participants

The research was conducted in a Hong Kong primary school. Due to privacy issues, the feasibility of collecting data in different primary schools was low in Hong Kong context. Refer to Section 2.2 (p. 4), Burnett & Mandel (2010) conducted a small scale qualitative research about positive feedback in a school and the data is collected by structured interviews and classroom observation. In this study, the same approach was adopted, all research data was collected within the 4-month Field Experience semester in the same school. Creswell (2013) suggested that a qualitative study collects data which tends to be more open-ended without predetermined responses. In this study, qualitative data was collected by classroom observations during lessons and semi-structured interviews with in-service teachers regarding their perceptions on using verbal feedback to manage students' classroom behaviors. The data was collected in a Hong Kong primary school which locates in Sheung Shui and

majority of the students in this school are cross-border students from Mainland China. There were four participants in this study and all of them are in-service teachers of this primary school. The profile of the participants is listed as follows (see Figure 1):

Participants	General Information				
	Sex	Age	Year(s) of teaching experience	Subject taught in the observed lesson	Level of Students
T 01	F	30-35	9	English	P3
T 02	F	30-35	9	Visual Art	P2
T 03	M	45-50	19	Maths	P5
T 04	M	30-35	10	Chinese	P3

Figure 1: Participant's profile

Ethical issues were considered in this study as the informants participated in the research voluntarily, their interests and privacy were protected. Therefore, before data collection processes, consent forms were given to the participants of this research which informed them the research data they have provided would be kept confidential and deleted after the research. In this study, four school teachers were interviewed. Consent forms were given to the school principal as well as four participants who were interviewed before data collection.

3.2 Instruments - Data collection methods

In this study, two instruments were adopted, achieving the purpose of triangulation. The first instrument was observation while the second instrument was semi-structured individual interviews with in-service teachers. The data were collected from classroom observations and interviews in December, which are both qualitative research methods. There were four participants and all of them were in-service teachers who are teaching in the same Hong Kong primary school at present. The age range, years of teaching and what subjects the participants teaching were not the important factors of this study and they were chosen randomly.

3.2.1 Classroom Observation

Non-participant observation was made under a natural classroom context in order to guarantee the authenticity of the collected data. Murchison (2010) believed that close observations can reveal the implicit things which the participants may not be aware of. As this non-participant observation took place under a natural classroom context, authentic frequency of the verbal feedback the teacher used was recognized and recorded as the real and instant teacher-student interaction was observed. Due to the identity of student teacher, it was inevi1 for the researcher to have little participation in classroom interactions. Regarding the observation roles, the researcher was an observer-as-participant and observed how teachers used verbal feedback to manage students' classroom behaviors in the condition of not directly involved in the teacher-student interaction. Throughout the process, the researcher recorded field notes of the classroom observation with reference to the observation scheme (Appendix 1, p. 38). The observation scheme was designed to facilitate the organization of the field notes and the observational data.

3.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews with in-service teachers

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with four Hong Kong in-service teachers. According to Seidman (2013), adopting a qualitative interview methodology aims at understanding the personal experience through interview questions within the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, in-depth information was gained in this study. In addition, the rationale of the teachers using specific type of feedback to manage the students' classroom behaviors was investigated. In contrast, semi-structured interviews provided the researcher with the flexibility to ask follow-up questions which made the interviews more in-depth. An interview guide (Appendix 2, p. 39) was developed with reference to Patton (2002) and interview questions were mostly open-ended questions which provided room for interviewees to express their personal thoughts and views. During the interviews, notes were taken and the responses given by the interviewees were recorded by the cell-phone which facilitated the transcription and the analysis of the interview data after the stage of data collection.

3.3 Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data analysis consists of few steps. Firstly, all the semi-structured interviews conducted with the in-service teacher respondents were fully transcribed with reference to the recordings. As the interviewees used their L1, Cantonese, to give responses of the interviews, the data of interviews was translated from Chinese to English. Secondly, the transcription was coded and categorized into different sub-headings in relation to the research questions, including, the types of verbal feedback the teacher used, the effects of the verbal feedback and the effectiveness of the verbal feedback to manage students' behavior. Thirdly, the important words, phrases and gist of the transcription were cited and put into the related categories. Lastly, the researcher integrated and evaluated the interrelationship between the observational data collected in classroom observation and the transcribed data collected in semi-structured interviews. For instance, the alignment and differences of the data collected from observations and interviews.

4. <u>Results</u>

In this section, three research questions (see Section 1.1, p. 3) are addressed by the integration of the data collected from classroom observations and interviews. The findings are categorized and illustrated as follows:

1) **Types** of verbal feedback the teacher used (Section 4.1, p. 10)
2) **Impacts** of verbal feedback the teacher used (Section 4.2, p. 18)
3) Teachers' perceptions on the **effectiveness** of verbal feedback the teacher used (Section 4.3 p. 22)

*4.1 <u>The **types of verbal feedback** teachers used to manage students' classroom behavior</u>*

In this section, types of verbal feedback the teacher used to manage students' classroom behavior is investigated by analyzing the data collected in classroom observation and interviews.
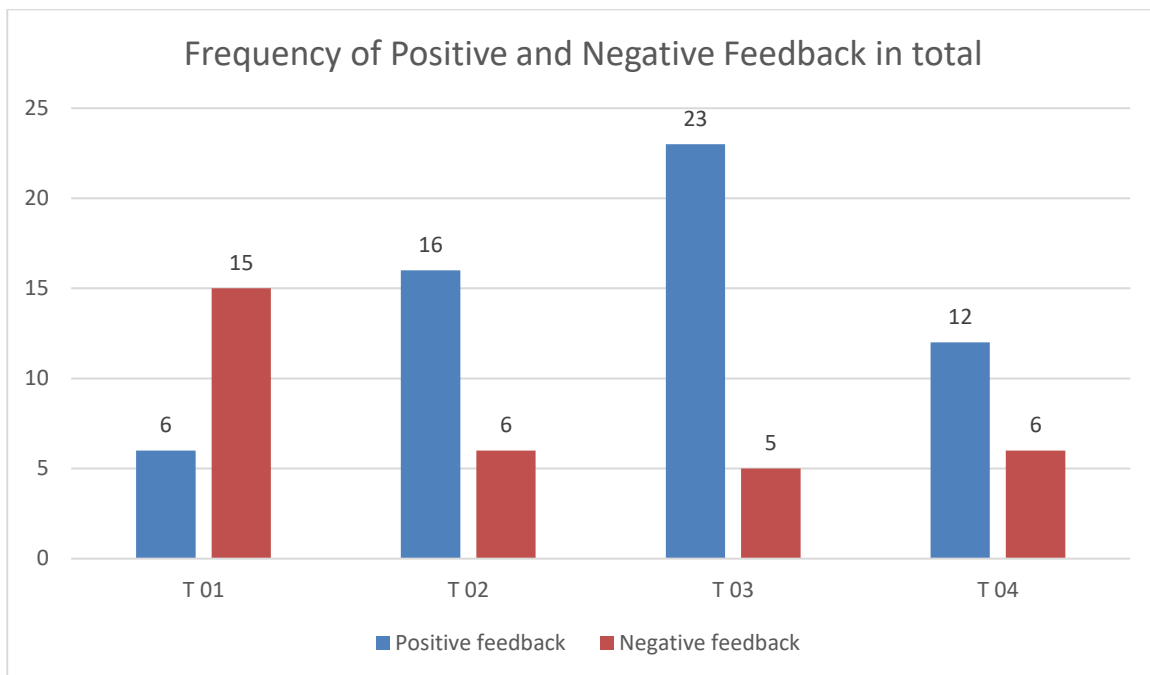
Figure 2. Frequency of Positive and Negative Feedback in total

The observational data shown in Figure 2 illustrates all participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used both positive and negative verbal feedback to manage students' classroom behavior. Apart from T 01, the rest of the participants, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used more positive feedback than negative feedback, positive feedback was used at least double than that of negative feedback's.

Extract 1

"*In my classroom, I **use both positive and negative feedback** because **using only one kind of feedback in the lesson is a little bit strange**. For example, I can use positive feedback to reinforce good behavior and negative feedback to intervene in misbehavior, it depends.*" (T 01)

Extract 2

"*I **used both positive and negative verbal feedback** because both are very clear and reasonable instructions given by the teacher.*" (T 03)

Extract 3

"*I would use **both positive and negative verbal feedback firmly**, like 'You did very well', 'You cannot leave the seat.', 'You should sit down and put away the stationery.' etc.*" (T 03)

Extracts 1 to 3 given by T 01 and T 03 explicitly show that both teachers used both positive and negative verbal feedback to manage students' classroom behavior, either good behavior or

misbehavior found in their classrooms. Both T 01 and T 03 agreed that positive and negative verbal feedback are reciprocal and interdependent instead of contradicting each other. Both positive and negative verbal feedback could be used in the same lesson, it solely depended on how teacher intervened in students' classroom behavior.

Extract 4
*"I usually use some non-verbal cues before using either positive or negative verbal feedback, like stare at some misbehaved students to let them know I feel unhappy about their misbehavior. If they respond to me and stop that misbehavior, I would not use verbal feedback. If not, they still perform that misbehavior, I would **tell them my expectations verbally by using both positive and negative feedback.**"* (T 02)

Extract 5
*"For instance, if a student answer my questions correctly or he or she performs a good classroom behavior, like listen to my instructions and pay attention in my lesson, **I would praise them.** Praising is a kind of **positive feedback**. For **negative feedback**, like asking student not to do something or judge their performance or classroom behavior by using **negative wordings**."* (T 04)

Extracts 4 and 5 given by T 02 and T 04 specifically indicate what situation they would use either positive or negative feedback. T 02 preferred to use non-verbal cues before using either positive or negative verbal feedback while T 04 considered questioning as a mean to give positive verbal feedback to students while negative feedback includes the use of negative wordings.

Figure 2 and extracts 1 to 5 show that all participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 are familiarize with both positive and negative verbal feedback. They were able to distinguish the differences between them. All of the participants used both positive and negative feedback in their lessons to manage students' classroom behavior. They used certain kind of verbal feedback in relation to the situation in class and students' classroom behavior. Although all of them used both positive and negative verbal feedback to manage classrooms, some of them preferred to use non-verbal cues before using verbal feedback.

Regarding the definition of positive feedback suggested by Burnett & Mandel (2010), positive feedback can be categorized into ability praise, effort praise and general praise. (Section 2.2, p.4)

General praise

The extracts and fieldnotes are based on the general praise the participants used in classrooms. General praise is compliment consists of general and simple wordings that shows agreement and encouragement to students as well as reinforcing their good classroom behavior. All participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used simple adjectives like 'good' and 'well' to praise their students.

Extract 6
> *"In my lessons, verbal praise is frequently used. For example, I would use general feedback like **'good'**, **'very good'** to praise my students."* (T 01)

Extract 7
> *"The most frequently used feedback in my classroom is **'well done'**, **'good try'**…."* (T 02)

Extract 8
> *"I would use both positive and negative verbal feedback firmly, like **'You did very well'**…"* (T 03)

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:
> Very good! Good try! Thank you! (T 04)

Ability praise

The fieldnotes mentioned below are based on the ability praise that T 01 and T 03 used in classrooms. T 01 praised the student about her ability to self-correct the grammatical mistakes she made when she answered teachers' questions while T 03 praised students about their ability to jot notes. The examples below show that ability praise is concrete and explicit feedback given by teachers which specifically indicates students' abilities or skills that teachers appreciate.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:

She can self-correct, very good! (T 01)
You are good at jotting notes! (T 03)

Effort praise

The fieldnotes below show that T 01 and T 02 teachers appreciated students' good classroom

behavior and the effort they paid. Both teachers tried to encourage students to keep doing that good

behavior by praising verbally and giving them marks.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:
You are very helpful! Give you a mark. (T 01)
Thank you for following our class rules. (T 02)

Frequency of different types of Positive feedback

The data shown in Figure 3 was collected by classroom observation which shows the frequency of

different types of positive verbal feedback the teacher used to manage students' classroom behavior.
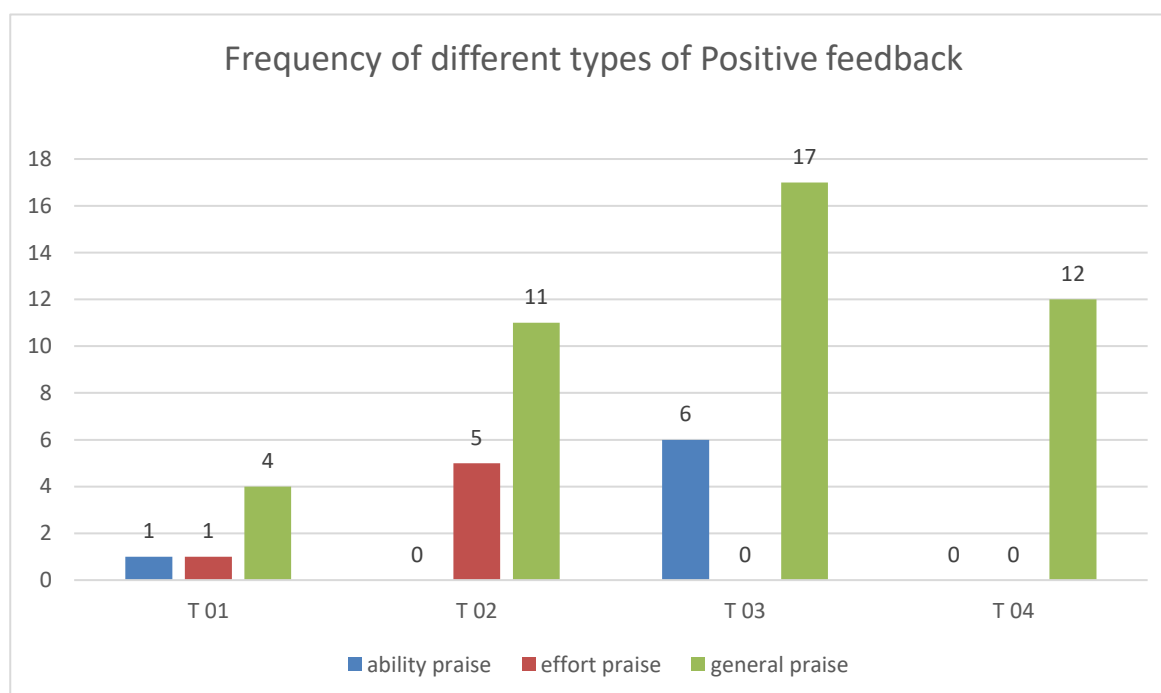

Figure 3. Frequency of different types of Positive feedback

Regarding the observational data depicted in Figure 3, general praise is the most frequent positive

feedback used by the participants to manage students' classroom behavior. All participants, T 01, T

02, T 03 and T 04 used general praise to show compliment to students. Some participants used

ability praise and effort praise, T 01 and T 03 used some ability praise while T 01 and T 02 used

some effort praise. All of the participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used more general praise than ability praise and effort praise. Figure 4 reveals the total frequency of positive verbal feedback adopted by all participants.
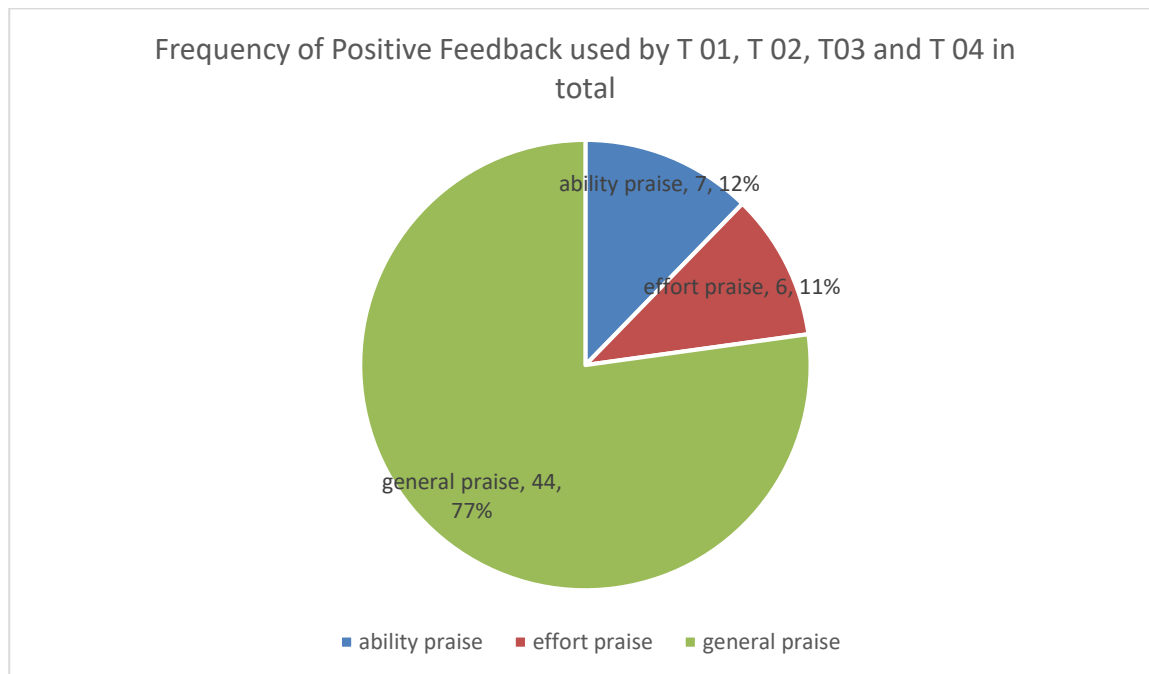

Frequency of Positive Feedback used by T 01, T 02, T03 and T 04 in total

ability praise, 7, 12%

effort praise, 6, 11%

general praise, 44, 77%

■ ability praise   ■ effort praise   ■ general praise

Figure 4. Frequency of Positive Feedback used by T 01, T 02, T03 and T 04 in total

In reference to the observational data depicted in Figure 4, 77% of the positive feedback used by all participants is general praise, 12% of it is ability praise and 11% of it is effort praise.

4.1.2   Types of **Negative feedback** teachers used to manage students' classroom behavior

As suggested by Nelson and Roberts (2000), negative feedback is categorized into reprimands, ultimatums, consequences and leave requests. (Section 2.2, p.5)

Reprimands

The extracts and fieldnotes are based on the 'reprimands' the participants used in classrooms, some wordings are frequently used, including 'stop', 'don't', 'keep', 'cannot', etc. All participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used aforementioned feedback to intervene in students' misbehavior firmly.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:

You are talking. Stop talking. Keep quiet. Keep going. (T 01)

You are talking. Stop talking. Keep quiet. (T 02)

Don't look at your notes! Look at the blackboard! (T 03)

Don't talk. Listen to me (T 03)

Stop talking. Keep quiet. Don't say anything that is not related to this lesson. (T 04)

Stop it! (T 04)

Extract 9

*"The most frequently used feedback in my classroom are ….'**sit properly**' and '**put away something**'."* (T 02)

Extract 10

*"I would use both positive and negative verbal feedback firmly, like …'**You cannot leave the seat.**', 'You should sit down and put away the stationery.' etc."* (T 03)

Consequences

Some participants, T 01 and T 02 used 'consequences' as negative feedback during classroom observation, the extracts and fieldnotes in the following illustrate that both teachers tried to manage students' behavior by telling them the consequences if they did not behave. T 03 gave a typical example of the negative feedback of 'consequence'.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:

Stand up. If you do not stand up, I will not let you go recess. (T 01)

If you don't know how to sit, stand at the back of the classroom. (T 02)

Extract 11

*"I would not use negative feedback about the consequence, like '**If you do or do not do something, you will…**'."* (T 03)

Ultimatums

In the following, a participant, T 02 tried to use 'ultimatums' to stop students' misbehavior by not giving student the lesson materials he liked.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:

If you don't stop, **I will not** give you the materials and take away your scissors. (T 02)

Leave requests

T 03 gave an example of 'leave requests' below. He emphasized that he never used in his classroom.

The example shows that 'leave requests' are explicit and direct command that a teacher asks a student to leave the classroom during the lesson.

Extract 12

*"Most importantly, I never use the feedback like '**Go out. Leave the classroom.**', I think this kind of feedback would...."* (T 03)

Figure 5 depicts the frequency of different types of negative feedback the participants used during classroom observation.
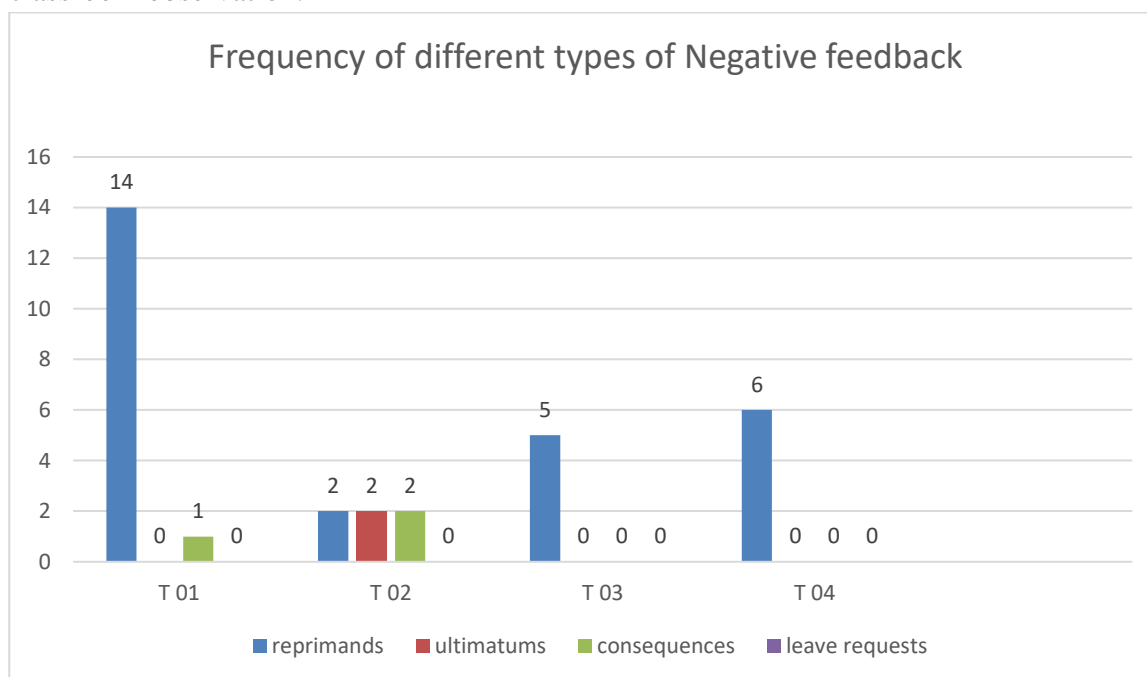

Figure 5. Frequency of different types of Negative feedback

Regarding Figure 5, all participants used reprimands in their classrooms to manage students' misbehavior. None of the participants used leave requests, it reveals that none of the students were asked to leave the classroom due to the misbehavior. Furthermore, some participants used ultimatums and consequences, T 01 used consequences once while T 02 used both ultimatums and consequences twice.

Figure 6 reveals the total frequency of negative verbal feedback adopted by all participants.
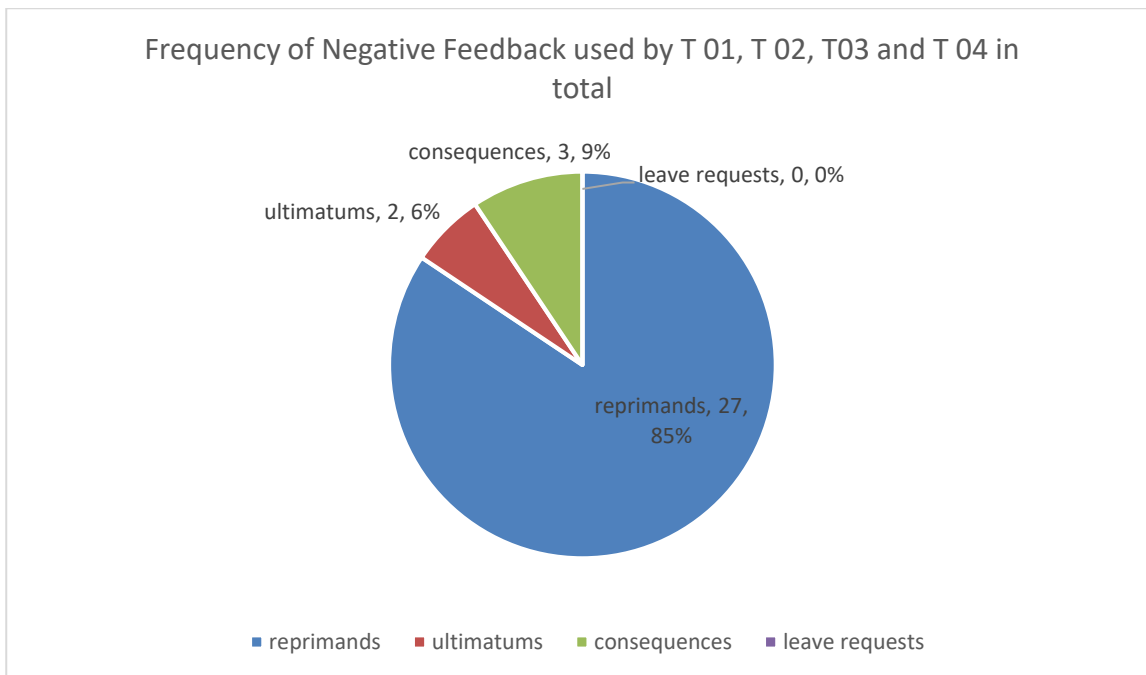
Figure 6. Frequency of Negative Feedback used by T 01, T 02, T03 and T 04 in total

Figure 6 illustrates the proportion of the negative feedback used by all participants, 85% of the

negative feedback is 'reprimands', 9% of it is 'consequence's, 6% of it is 'ultimatums' and 0% of it

is 'leave requests'.

4.2 Teachers' perceptions on the **impacts** of the verbal feedback they used

4.2.1 Impacts of **Positive feedback**

The following fieldnotes and interview extracts reveal that teachers think that positive feedback

enhances students' good behavior in classrooms and confidence in learning. With reference to the

observation notes below, students' good behaviors were reinforced when the participants used

positive feedback to manage the classrooms. On the other hand, as mentioned in the Section 4.1.1

(p.13), positive feedback consists of positive wordings. T 03 claimed that positive feedback brings

positive impacts on shaping students' good behavior in classrooms. Through giving positive

feedback, it gave signals to students that their teacher appreciated their good behavior. Praises and

compliments encouraged students to behave and keep their good behavior in classrooms. Besides, T

01 suggested that positive feedback also provided students with the sense of accomplishment and

satisfaction which also facilitated their learning and engagement in class as students were given the confidence to express their thoughts.

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:
The rest of the class help their classmates. More students put up their hands to answer teacher's questions (T 01)
Less students shout out their answers and they raise up their hands and wait for teacher to call their names. More and more students answer teacher's questions (T 02)
Students continue to jot the notes. (T 03)
Students discuss topics related to their learning in the lesson (T 04)

Extract 13
*"For positive feedback, I think it can **motivate and encourage** students to continue the 'good' classroom behavior."* (T 03)

Extract 14
*"In my lessons, verbal praise is frequently used. For example, I would use general feedback like 'good', 'very good' to praise my students. These kinds of praise can let my students gain **the sense of accomplishment**. They know that they are successful to follow the teacher and the lesson, this would also make them **engage** the class more... Therefore, throughout the process, students could gain **the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction**. They become more confident to tell us their thoughts."* (T 01)

The following interview extracts (Extract 15 to 18) show that all participants agreed that positive feedback brings good mood for both teachers and students.

Extract 15
*"I always **feel happy** when I use positive feedback. There is also a relaxing and joyful environment in class."* (T 01)

Extract 16
*"When I use positive feedback, I **feel happy**."* (T 02)

Extract 17
*"I **feel very happy** when I use positive feedback while I am emotional when I use negative feedback."* (T 03)

Extract 18

*"**Students feel happy** when they hear the positive feedback…**Both students and I feel happy** when I use positive feedback as it promotes joyful atmosphere in classroom."* (T 04)

The responses above portray the psychological condition of teachers and students when the participants used positive feedback in their classrooms. Participants T 01, T 02 and T 03 described their emotions when they used the positive feedback. They always felt happy when they used positive feedback to manage students' behavior. T 04 also depicted students' emotions when they heard the positive feedback. Both teachers and students felt happy when the positive feedback was used in classrooms. Joyful atmosphere was cultivated in classrooms.

4.2.2 Impacts of **Negative feedback**

Extracts 19, 20 and 21 reflect teachers' concerns towards negative feedback that might hinder the lesson flow, students' self-esteem and confidence in learning. As suggested by T 01 and T 02, negative feedback might have scared the students. Although students were remained quiet, they were not confident and motivated to express their thoughts in lessons which might hinder their learning in different subjects. Sometimes, negative feedback may be regarded and interpreted as a kind of punishment which may affect students' self-esteem. As T 04 explained, negative feedback also distracted whole class' attention and the learning atmosphere in classrooms was also deteriorated.

Extract 19
*"….negative feedback **would seriously affect students' 'self-esteem'** and **'confidence'**. 'self-esteem' and 'confidence' are very important in learning English. Using negative feedback would lower students' motivation to learn English and they would not like to engage in the lesson."* (T 01)

Extract 20
*"Frankly speaking, I would use negative feedback when I was a bit emotional. Students were scared with a blank face, **they were quiet and just sit still**."* (T 02)

Extract 21
*"As I mentioned before, negative feedback may make students emotional and upset, it is **slower for***

*them to adjust their emotions and get back to the lesson. Also, giving negative feedback, like scolding or punishing some misbehaved student during lesson time, **the lesson flow is interrupted and the rest of the class would feel confused, unhappy and difficult to gain their attention again in the lesson**."* (T 04)

On the other hand, participants T 01, T 03 and T 04 raised their concerns towards the use of negative feedback affecting teacher-student relationship (Extract 22, 23 and 24). They believed that using negative feedback would challenge teacher-student relationship as students felt upset when they heard negative feedback.

Extract 22
*"For negative feedback, I think negative feedback might manage students' challenging behavior in the short run. However, it would **seriously affect teacher-student relationship** as well as the learning atmosphere in class. It is very **difficult to repair** if the teach-student relationship becomes worse."* (T 01)

Extract 23
*"Most importantly, **I never use** the feedback like 'Go out. Leave the classroom.', I think this kind of feedback would distract the whole thing and **seriously affect teacher-student relationship.**"* (T 03)

Extract 24
*"When I use negative feedback, both students and I are a bit upset and emotional which might also **hinder the teacher-student relationship.**"* (T 04)

With regard to the fieldnotes below, during classroom observation, it was observed that students felt upset and looked at the floor when T 04 used negative feedback. The interview responses given by T 02 and T 04 reveal that both teachers and students felt emotional and angry when they used or heard the negative feedback. It is noted that negative emotions are triggered in classrooms when teachers used negative feedback

Fieldnotes recorded during classroom observation:
S feel very upset and look at the floor (T 04)

Extract 25
*"When I use negative feedback, I am **emotional**. The aim of using negative feedback is to create a*

'strict' atmosphere in classroom to let misbehaved student know their behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable that they should stop at once." (T 02)

Extract 26
*"When I use negative feedback, **both students and I** are a bit **upset and emotional** which might also hinder the teacher-student relationship."* (T 04)

Extract 27
*"Honestly, to students, these kinds of negative feedback are **irritant** which **may affect their emotions in a negative way, they may feel upset or angry,** etc."* (T 04)

4.3 **Effectiveness** of the verbal feedback the teacher used to manage students' classroom behaviour

In this section, the effectiveness of the verbal feedback the teacher used to manage students' classroom behavior is evaluated. In the following, all participants think that both positive and negative feedback are effective in managing students' classroom behavior.

Extract 28
*"To a large extent yes, verbal feedback is **the most direct way** to manage students' misbehavior."* (T 01)

Extract 29
*"I think verbal feedback is **quite important to classroom management** as it is **very explicit and direct way** to let students know our expectations…. For example, some of them take out their scissors, I would use verbal feedback to intervene in as this is the most direct way to stop that dangerous misbehavior."* (T 02)

Extract 30
*"I used **both positive and negative verbal feedback** because both are very **clear and reasonable** instructions given by the teacher."* (T 03)

Extract 31
*"I think **verbal feedback is quite significant and important for classroom management** because it is direct and focused. Verbal feedback keeps students on a right track on both learning and classroom behavior. Also, verbal feedback can gain students' attention and adjust their behavior immediately, reminding them to pay attention in class which can also **smoothen the lesson flow**."* (T 04)

Extract 32

*"In my opinion, I think **both positive and negative feedback can manage students' behavior immediately**. I think the aim of giving feedback is to maintain students' attention and get them on task in the lesson."* (T 04)

With reference to the observation notes (Appendix 3, p. 40), the percentage of positive and negative succeeded to manage student's classroom behavior are 100% and 100% respectively, this showed that both positive and negative verbal feedback are significant to manage student's classroom behavior immediately. The above responses extracted from interviews (Extract 28 to 32) also showed that all participants believed that both positive and negative verbal feedback are direct, effective, and immediate instructions given by teachers to manage students' classroom behavior, either good behavior or misbehavior. The example illustrated by T 02 reveals how verbal feedback successfully intervene in dangerous behavior in classrooms. Moreover, T 04 suggested the interactive relationship between verbal feedback and classroom management. T 04 also claimed that giving verbal feedback could facilitate the classroom management as well as the lesson flow which enhanced students' learning and classroom behavior.

In addition, Extract 33 and 34 below reveals the rationale of T 03 using verbal feedback to manage his classroom. Unlike written feedback, students could receive teachers' verbal feedback audibly so that they could explicitly know teachers' instructions and expectations. Moreover, T 03 also raised the concerns towards the use of verbal feedback that teachers should carefully consider when they use verbal feedback. Verbal feedback could contribute to establish a good classroom management if verbal feedback is used in an accurate and consistent way.

Extract 33
*"I think the verbal feedback I used positively affect the classroom management. I think verbal feedback is the most direct way for students to receive a message. It is **ineffective to manage students' classroom behavior by giving them a written feedback on blackboard**. Verbal feedback let students know what they should do at that moment as well as teachers' requirements…Verbal feedback gives students clear instructions, regulations and rules that they should follow."* (T 03)

Extract 34

*"In my opinion, I think both positive and negative verbal feedback are immediate and effective ways and signals to reinforce students' positive classroom behavior or to intervene in the misbehavior that found in classroom....At the same time, we have to **pay attention to the accuracy, timing and consistence of giving feedback**. If the feedback is given accurately, at a good timing as well as consistently used in regular lessons, students' 'good' classroom behavior can definitely be reinforced."* (T 03)

The following claims given by T 01, T 02 and T 04 (Extracts 35 to 38) show their thoughts of the effectiveness of positive and negative feedback. They believed that positive feedback is more effective to manage the classrooms in the long run. T 01 tried to establish a classroom routine and positive learning environment in the class by using positive feedback as she expected that all of the students enjoyed the praise given by the teacher and peers. T 02, T 03 and T 04 explained that positive feedback could create a good psychological condition for students, they enjoyed hearing positive wordings than negative wordings. Therefore, positive feedback facilitated students' engagement in class. At the same time, students' misbehavior could be reduced.

Extract 35
*"To me, I think **positive feedback is undoubtedly more effective to manage students' behavior in the long run**. In my lesson, if some students behave, I would ask the rest of the class say 'very good' with their thumbs up to their classmates or even clap hands for the behaved students. This can let all of students know that they will get praise from their teacher and classmates if they behave. Therefore, they will self-discipline because everyone wants the praise from others. Peer pressure could also facilitate the classroom management. On the other hand, using positive feedback in classroom could also **cultivate a positive learning environment and atmosphere in class, this could also enhance a good classroom management.**"* (T 01)

Extract 36
*"I think **positive verbal feedback is more effective as psychologically, students are willing to accept positive words, feedback or comments from teachers.** They would also respond in a positive way. I always tell my supporting student teachers, we should avoid using negative wordings like 'don't' and 'no'. We should tell our student what they should do and what classroom behavior we expect them to do."* (T 02)

Extract 37
*"On the other hand, **to student, positive feedback is more memorable as all the students like the praise from their teacher. They would feel happy when we use positive feedback.**"* (T 03)

Extract 38

*"Regarding the effectiveness, I think **positive feedback is relatively more effective than negative feedback** because students could engage to the lesson immediately after listening to the positive feedback given by their teachers. Students feel happy when they hear the positive feedback."* (T 04)

Moreover, the example given by T 03 in Extract 39 illustrates why positive feedback is more effective than negative feedback. Comparatively, positive feedback is more concrete and constructive as it explicitly announces students what they should do in classroom. Students do not have any excuses to misbehave when they hear positive feedback.

Extract 39

*"In my opinion, in the long run, positive feedback is more effective because **positive feedback is more constructive than negative feedback.** Let me give you an example, 'You cannot play the rubber.', then, the student may play the ruler. These kinds of negative feedback are not constructive. If I use positive feedback like 'You should put away the stationery. You are good student.', student would know my instructions immediately.* (T 03)

In the following, participants expressed their concerns towards the drawbacks of using negative feedback to manage their classrooms.

Extract 40

*"As I mentioned before, negative feedback may make students emotional and upset, it is slower for them to adjust their emotions and get back to the lesson. Also, giving negative feedback, like scolding or punishing some misbehaved student during lesson time, the lesson flow is interrupted and the rest of the class would feel confused, unhappy and **difficult to gain their attention** again in the lesson. Giving negative feedback may also **trigger more classroom misbehavior** because some students may perform misbehavior to gain teachers' attention."* (T 04)

T 04 (Extract 40) pointed out that negative feedback would affect students' emotional and psychological condition during the lesson, students would lose track if they felt upset. Therefore, it was very difficult for him or her to engage in the lesson again. Apart from that, the learning atmosphere of the whole class would also be disturbed and affected.

Extract 41

"For negative feedback, I think negative feedback might manage students' challenging behavior in the short run. However, it would seriously affect teacher-student relationship as well as the learning

*atmosphere in class. It is very difficult to repair if the **teach-student relationship** becomes worse.”* (T 01)

Extract 42
*“I would not use negative feedback about the consequence, like 'If you do or do not do something, you will…'. Most importantly, I never use the feedback like 'Go out. Leave the classroom.', I think this kind of feedback would distract the whole thing and **seriously affect teacher-student relationship**.”* (T 03)

T 01 and T 03 (Extract 41 and 42) also expressed their worries of using negative feedback in classrooms. They thought that negative feedback would negatively affect teach-student relationship as negative feedback usually involves negative and irritative wordings which might upset students. T 01 also claimed that repairing the teacher-student relationship would not be an easy task once negative feedback is used.

Due to the unique situation in different classrooms, some participants recommended that individual characters and difference should be considered when teachers use verbal feedback in their classrooms.

Extract 43
*“To me, as a teacher, I think we **should not use one method** to deal with or get along with students as each of them is unique.”* (T 01)

Extract 44
*“For some students, verbal feedback is not enough to make them behave. Sometimes, we have to **perform and demonstrate that good behavior.”*** (T 02)

Extract 45
*“I would **consider both students' character and their individual learning needs before giving feedback**. For students, positive feedback may be more effective to manage their classroom behavior as well as enhance their learning while negative feedback is more effective for some students. Therefore, I would **spend quite a lot of time to establish rapport with my students** in order to know more about their own characters and learning needs. This can foster the accuracy and effectiveness of verbal feedback I used in class.”* (T 04)

With reference to the previous mentioned points, all participants acknowledged the effectiveness of both positive and negative feedback in managing students' classroom behavior. Although all participants claimed that positive feedback is more effective than negative feedback in the long run, some participants reminded that teachers should consider students' individual differences, for instance, their learning needs, personality and characters when they decide which type of verbal feedback they use to manage students' behavior. T 01 (Extract 43) emphasized the uniqueness of every student and T 02 (Extract 44) advised teachers to demonstrate the good behavior in classrooms to explicitly show teachers' expectations to students. Furthermore, T 04 (Extract 45) recommended constructive ways on how teachers select effective verbal feedback. He believed that spending time to communicate with students can help teachers get themselves familiarize students' individual characters and differences which enhance the use and effectiveness of verbal feedback in classrooms.

5. Discussion

The results explained the frequency and the proportion of positive and negative feedback the participants used to manage students' behaviors during lessons. All participants, except T 01, used more positive feedback than negative feedback. In the category of positive feedback, general praises were used most, with the high proportion at about 75%, whereas reprimands were the negative feedback which most frequently used in classrooms that constituted 85% of the total frequency of negative feedback used in classrooms. Few phenomena were found. First, there was the unvaried use of verbal feedback to manage classroom behavior in the participants. This can possibly be explained by the teacher professional development factor which there was inadequate teacher professional support of strategies of giving verbal feedback. The number of courses in relation to the strategies of giving feedback the participants have taken in their teaching years were investigated during interviews. In Appendix 4 (p. 46), '*I didn't take any courses specifically about the strategies of giving feedback.*' (T 01), '*For measures of giving feedback, I haven't participated in any talks about that but I think I gained some experience when I taught students.*' (T 02),

*'Regarding the strategies of giving feedback, I **have never taken any courses** specifically about 'strategies of giving feedback'.'* (T 03) and *'Regarding the strategies of giving feedback, **I have not attended any workshops**.'* (T 04) All responses from the participants illustrated that specific strategies of giving verbal feedback was neglected in the teacher profession development of Hong Kong while all participants illustrated that they have attended talks or workshops about classroom management on Teacher Development Day. This may explain why the participants relied on using certain type of verbal feedback (general praises and reprimands) when they intervened in students' classroom behavior. According to Hattie (2012), general praise can create a comfortable and supportive atmosphere in classrooms and is welcomed and expected by students. In contrast, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggested that feedback should include the clarification of what good performance is, the self-assessment by the learners, encouraging dialogues between teacher and peers as well as the cultivation of positive motivation and self-esteem in class. Nevertheless, the measures and strategies of giving feedback should consider to be added in the teacher profession development organized by schools and the Education Bureau as general praise and reprimands did not explicitly informed students about teachers' expectations about either good or misbehavior in classrooms. Limited use of constructive verbal feedback may hinder the effectiveness of classroom management and increase students' behavioral problems in classrooms. (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

Second, majority of the participants, except T 01, adopted more positive feedback than negative feedback in classroom observations. During interviews, all participants acknowledged that positive feedback should be used more frequently in classrooms. Positive, narrative feedback, which is supportive and non-judgmental, can encourage teacher-student dialogue and foster positive motivation for enhancing self-esteem and autonomy (Hawk & Shah, 2008). With reference to the classroom observation fieldnotes (Appendix 3, p. 40), the immediate effect of using positive feedback was positive, students' classroom behavior was managed and they became motivated in the lesson. According to Hawk & Shah (2008), students are more willing to receive the message

when teachers give feedback with a positive attitude and respect. In classroom observation, it could be observed that students reacted positively after they heard the positive feedback from teachers.

Another interesting phenomenon was found. With reference to the research conducted by Nelson and Roberts (2000) that leave requests were used to manage students' behavior in US classrooms. However, the results of this research, none leave request were found. All participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 never adopted leave requests when they were intervening student's classroom behavior, it showed that none of the students were asked to leave the classroom due to their misbehavior. T 03 explained the rationale and reason of not using leave request in his classroom. '*Most importantly, I never use the feedback like 'Go out. Leave the classroom.', I think this kind of feedback would distract the whole thing and **seriously affect teacher-student relationship**.'* (T 03) T 03 raised the teacher-student relationship factor which other participants also considered the factor of teacher-student relationship when they decided the use of verbal feedback. This may be related to the education culture in Hong Kong and how teachers' role is perceived in Hong Kong society. According to Penfold & Veen (2014), Hong Kong is a Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC), whose values are shaped by the philosophy of Confucius. Due to the geographical location of Hong Kong, Hong Kong is undoubtedly affected by Confucian Heritage Culture which is also an important element in Chinese culture, especially in education aspect. The unique value of Confucius suggested by Ip (1996) and Gold, Guthrie & Wank (2002) illustrated that the relationships between individuals was valued in Confucian Heritage Culture. Same phenomenon was found in the results of this study that all participants. T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 emphasized the feeling of students and their relationships with students. Moreover, with reference to Lam (1984), Hong Kong students also pay attention to their relationship with teachers and they believed that the empathy, respect and genuineness of teachers as well as the necessary conditions of a helping relation will positively contribute to the relationship between teachers and them, and in turn to effective teaching. The Confucius culture in Hong Kong and perceptions of teachers and students revealed the possible underlying reasons why leave requests were not used in this study. If leave

request is used in classrooms, it may also lead to irreversible consequences and hinder the safety of student as the student is not supervised by teacher in the classroom. Moreover, some participants also emphasized the importance of self-esteem of students. Glasser (1993) pointed out that positive expectations from teachers is crucial in classrooms as it is important for students to develop an appreciation of self at an early age. In addition, according to House (2003) & Shen and Tam (2008), Hong Kong students got high levels of achievement in academic aspect but they have low self-efficacy. In this study, some participants, for instance, T 01 also raised the emphasis towards the importance of self-esteem and confidence of students (see Extract 19, p.20) and students care about how their teachers and peers perceive them. The factor of not affecting student's self-esteem and confidence may also explained why all participants in this study did not adopt leave requests in their classrooms as leave requests would inevitably affect the self-esteem of students as students would undoubtedly feel embarrassed if their teachers asked them to leave the classroom. In addition, Education Bureau forbidden humiliation and corporal punishment since 1991 and the role of in-service teachers is to ensure the safety of students. Professional, protective and considerate image of teachers has been rooted in Hong Kong and also expected by Hong Kong parents and society. In recent years, various sensational terms appear to describe and portray the overprotective image of Hong Kong parents, for instance, 'helicopter parenting' (Chua, 2011) and 'monster parents' (Wut, 2011) Some Hong Kong parents over-protect and spoil their children, some of them may even challenge the discipline system of the school and the decision made by their childrens' teachers. Parenting style may also lead to the phenomenon of teachers refrain from using leave request to manage students' classroom behavior. However, as Hong Kong primary schools can formulate and develop discipline system for their own school, leave request may be acceptable and used in some schools which is regarded as a kind of disciplinary process but in this study, all participants of the target school did not use leave request in the observed lesson and they expressed their rationale of not using leave request in their classrooms, for instance, T 03 thought that leave request would affect teacher-student relationship (Extract 23, p. 21).

Although instructions cannot eliminate behavioral problems in classroom, effective instructions could reduce classroom behavior problems. (Emmer & Stough, 2001) With reference to the results, all participants in this study, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 used verbal feedback as the direct instructions to manage students' classroom behavior. Both positive and negative feedback were used in the classrooms and all participants agreed that both were effective to intervene students' classroom behavior. Similarly, the results in this study is aligned with the phenomenon suggested by Nie & Lau (2009) which teachers tend to adopt the classroom management approach that involves both positive and negative measures to achieve multiple outcomes.

Interestingly, all participants pointed out that positive feedback was more effective to manage students' classroom behavior in the long run as they discovered that students enjoyed and pursued the praise and acknowledgement from teachers and they were more likely to engage in the class after receiving positive feedback. In fact, Education Bureau has started to introduce whole-day primary schooling in Hong Kong since 1993. Therefore, Hong Kong students spend most of their time with their teachers and classmates in school. Teachers has become significant people in their daily life. Wong & Wong (1998) stated that the probability of receiving positive behaviors in return will be increased when important people intentionally use kind words and actions. In addition, the research conducted by Burnett (2002) examined the interrelationships between feedback and students' perceptions of their relationship with their teacher as well as the classroom environment. The research conducted by Burnett in 2002 showed that extensive positive feedback and little negative feedback create a positive student-teacher relationship and classroom environment. A well-managed classroom environment with clearly stated expectations can promote the sense of trust and comfort and positive relationships with all members of the classroom community, not only teacher but also peers. (Murray & Pianta, 2009) These helps explaining the process on how good classroom behaviors of students and student-teacher relationship were enhanced by the positive verbal feedback given by the participants, T01, T02, T03 and T04 in this study.

In fact, negative feedback consists of negative wordings which affected students' emotions while positive feedback involves positive and encouraging wordings. The results reveal that all participants admitted that both teachers and students had a good mood when teachers used positive feedback while they were emotional and upset when the teachers adopted negative feedback to intervene in students' classroom behavior. Emotions serve as a powerful vehicle for enhancing or inhibiting learning (Greenleaf, 2002) This illustrated the significance of students' and teachers' emotions in classrooms. From the perspectives of the participants in this study, all participants, T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04 agreed that positive feedback was comparatively effective than negative feedback to regulate the emotions of both teachers and students. According to Emmer & Gerwels (2006), positive feedback and aspects of students' classroom behavior can enhance their self-esteem as well as strengthening the bond between the teachers and the students. Contrastingly, negative responses to students' behavior can escalate the misbehavior in classrooms and limiting the interactions between teachers and students, therefore, it is suggested that teachers should focus on positive aspects of student behavior (Mesa, Lewis-Palmer, & Reinke, 2005; Downing & Mitchem, 2005) Therefore, in the long run, positive classroom behavior and learning can be reinforced when students receive positive feedback as positive emotions, harmonious teacher-student bond and learning environment are cultivated in classrooms.

6. Limitations and Implications

In terms of the limitations of this study, firstly, the sample size is small as there were only four participants were observed and interviewed in the semi-structured interviews. Also, all participants are in-service teachers teaching at the same school. Therefore, there are possibilities that their pedagogies and responses were subconsciously affected by the school nature and policies. Although the phenomenon might not be generalisable in other primary schools, significance is still existed in this study due to the triangulation of data collection methods, including observation and interviews. Secondly, observer effects might also be existed as the presence of the researcher, a student teacher,

to a certain extent, might influence the interactions between in-service teachers and students in classrooms.

Regarding the implications, this study acknowledges the significance of using verbal feedback in managing primary classrooms. However, it is noted that all participants lacked specific training in using verbal feedback to manage students' classroom behavior. Education Bureau may consider reinforce the professional development of both in-service teachers and prospective teachers about the strategies of adopting verbal feedback in classroom management. Moreover, not only verbal feedback, various strategies can be used to manage students' classroom behavior. Lathrop (2007) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of targeted interventions "check in check out" (CICO) on reducing students' challenging behaviors. CICO has various behavioral measures like daily behavior report card. Effective classroom management should not heavily rely on the feedback given by teachers but also other behavioral measures. The study conducted by Lathrop (2007) also shows that more individualized and function-based interventions are proved to be effective on managing students' behaviors. Hong Kong teachers may develop an individualized behavioral plan or guide of feedback for individual students which could enhance appropriate behaviors of students.

7. <u>Conclusion</u>

In this study, the use, impacts and effectiveness of using verbal feedback in managing students' classroom behavior were investigated. Both positive and negative verbal feedback were adopted by all participants and they preferred to use more positive feedback in their classrooms as it reinforced students' appropriate classroom behavior and cultivated good teacher-student relationship and positive learning environment. It is found that some participants relied on using specific type of verbal feedback which is possibly due to the lack of teacher professional development in relation to the strategies of giving verbal feedback. The Education Bureau and the administrative team of primary schools may re-evaluate the elements in teacher professional development and teacher

development day. Moreover, in terms of education culture and parenting styles, there are significant difference between western context and Hong Kong context which leave requests were not used by all participants in this study. It is hoped that this study can raise and provide both in-service teachers and prospective teachers with awareness and some insights into the variety and the effectiveness of verbal feedback in managing students' classroom behavior in primary classrooms.

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Appendix 1: Observation Scheme

Date:		Name of the teacher:		Lesson / Time:	
Subject:		Class:		Class size:	
Time:	Students' behavior (Positive behaviors **OR** Misbehaviors: O/B/T/D/S/A)	Teachers' Feedback (Positive feedback: ap/ep/gp **OR** Negative feedback: r/u/c/lr)	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes **OR** No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)

Remarks:

Code for Misbehaviors: O= Off task/ B= Bothering others/ T= Talking/ D= Disrupting/ S= Out of seat/A= Arguing (Randall S. Sprick, Ph.D.,2010)

Positive feedback: ap=ability praise/ep=effort praise/ gp= general praise (Burnett, P. C. & Mandel, V., 2010)

Negative feedback: r=reprimands, u=ultimatums, c=consequences, lr=leave requests (Nelson and Roberts, 2000)

Appendix 1 References:

Randall S. Sprick, Ph.D. (2010). *Teacher Planner for the Secondary Classroom: A Companion to Discipline in the Secondary Classroom.* John Wiley & Sons.

Appendix 2: Interview guide and interview questions

Interview guide (with reference to Patton, M.Q., 2002)

Background or demographic questions

1. How many years have you been an in-service teacher in local primary school(s)?

2. Have you taken any course(s) related to strategies of giving feedback and classroom management?

Opinion or value questions

3. What are well-behaved and misbehaved students in your eyes?

4. In your opinion, what is feedback? How do you define negative and positive feedback? How is it related / important to classroom management?

5. What verbal feedback do you use to manage the classroom and students' challenging behaviors?

6. Why do you use the aforementioned verbal feedback? (The purposes of using those verbal feedback and language)

Experience or behavior questions

7. How do the verbal feedback you used affect the classroom management?

8. To what extent, you think the verbal feedback you used are effective and significantly manage students' challenging behaviors?

9. From your experience, which types of feedback do you find more effective to manage students' behavior? Which are less effective?

10. What factors will you consider when you are choosing to use specific types of feedback?

Feeling questions

11. What feelings do you have when you have to use either positive or negative feedback to manage students' behavior?

Appendix 2 References:

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and Evaluation Methods. Chapter 7: Qualitative Interviewing.* Third Edition. Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix 3: Observation Fieldnotes of all participants (T 01, T 02, T 03 and T 04)

Date: 7/12/2016		Name of the teacher: **T 01**		Lesson / Time: 10:10-10:45	
Subject: English		Class: 3_		Class size: 31	
Time:	Students' behavior	Teachers' Feedback	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes **OR** No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)
	T (Talking)	-ve feedback (r): (Ss' name / Class 3_), you are talking. Stop talking. Keep quiet. Keep going.	14	Yes	+Whole class stop talking a while
	O (Off-task)	T ask Ss to answer questions +ve feedback (gp): Very good! Good try! Thank you!	4	Yes	+Ss stop the misbehavior
	Positive behavior (help the	+ve feedback (ep): (Ss' name), you are very	1	Yes	+The rest of the class help their classmates

classmate)	helpful! Give you a mark.				
Positive behavior (Answer T's question and make self-correction)	+ve feedback (ap): She can self-correct, very good!	1	Yes	+More Ss put up their hands to answer T's questions
O (Off-task) Some Ss do not stand up at the end of the class	-ve feedback (c): Stand up. If you do not stand up, I will not let you go recess.	1	Yes	+Whole class stand up quickly

Date: 9/12/2016		Name of the teacher: **T 02**		Lesson / Time: 10:10-10:45	
Subject: Visual Art		Class: 2_		Class size: 32	
Time :	Students' behavior	Teachers' Feedback	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes **OR** No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)

	T (Talking)	-ve feedback (r): (Ss' name / Class 2_), you are talking. Stop talking. Keep quiet.	2	Yes	+Whole class becomes quiet and listen to T's instructions
	D (Disrupting: use the scissors to make some noise)	-ve feedback (u): If you don't stop, I will not give you the materials and take away your scissors.	2	Yes	+Whole class put their scissors on the desk and do not play with it
	Positive behavior (Put up their hands before answering T's questions)	+ve feedback (gp): Very good! Good try! Thank you! Give your classmates a thumb up!	11	Yes	+More and more answer T's questions
		+ve feedback (ep): Thank you for following our class rules. Raise up your hands before answering questions.	5	Yes	+Less Ss shout out their answers, Ss raise up their hands and wait for T to call their names.
	O (Off-task:	-ve feedback (c): If you don't know how	2	Yes	+All students sit properly

	sit improperly)	to sit, stand at the back of the classroom.			

Date: 13/12/2016		Name of the teacher: **T 03**		Lesson / Time: 10:45-11:20	
Subject: Maths		Class: 5_		Class size: 32	
Time :	Students' behavior	Teachers' Feedback	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes **OR** No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)
	Positive behavior (Ss jot notes on their self-learning notebook)	+ve feedback (gp): Class 5_, all of you did very well!	13	Yes	+Ss continue to jot the notes
		+ve feedback (ap): You are good at jotting notes!	6	Yes	
	O (Off-task: Ss do not look at the blackboard)	-ve feedback (r) Don't look at your notes! Look at the blackboard!	2	Yes	+Ss look at the blackboard

Time:	Students' behavior	Teachers' Feedback	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes OR No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)
	O (Off-task: Ss do not pay attention)	T ask Ss to answer questions +ve feedback (gp): Very good! Good try! Thank you!	4	Yes	+More Ss answer questions
	T (Talking)	-ve feedback (r): (Ss' name / Class 5_), don't talk. Listen to me.	3	Yes	+Ss become silent

Date:16/12/2016	Name of the teacher: **T 04**		Lesson / Time: 10:10-10:45		
Subject: Chinese	Class: 3_		Class size: 29		
Time :	Students' behavior	Teachers' Feedback	Frequency:	Manage the behaviors? (Yes **OR** No)	Effects to the whole class (+ / -)
	T (Talking)	-ve feedback (r): (Ss' name / Class 3_), Stop talking. Keep quiet. Don't	5	Yes	+Ss listen to the teacher +Ss discuss topics related to their

		say anything that is not related to this lesson.			learning in the lesson
	O (Off-task: Ss do not pay attention in class, e.g. do not take out Chinese book, do not jot notes on their self-learning note book)	T ask Ss to answer questions +ve feedback (gp): Very good! Good try! Thank you!	12	Yes	+Ss stop the misbehavior +Ss become more concentrated +More Ss raise their hands to answer questions
	D (Disrupting: use the pen to make some noise)	-ve feedback (r): Stop it!	1	Yes	+S stop the misbehavior -S feel very upset and look at the floor

Appendix 4: Interview transcript (Background or demographic questions) of all participants

Participant: T 01

Background or demographic questions

1. How many years have you been an in-service teacher in local primary school(s)?
9 years.

2. Have you taken any course(s) related to strategies of giving feedback and classroom management?

After my undergraduate, I didn't take any courses specifically about the strategies of giving feedback. But, when I was studying my undergraduate, I have taken some modules and courses in relation to what feedback should teachers use to manage students' classroom behavior. For classroom management, I have attended a lot of talks about this field on Teachers Professional Development Day.

Participant: T 02

Background or demographic questions

1. How many years have you been an in-service teacher in local primary school(s)?
9 years.

2. Have you taken any course(s) related to strategies of giving feedback and classroom management?

Definitely yes, for my undergraduate degree in ied, there were some courses about classroom management that all of the Bed students were required to take them as classroom management is an important issue in teaching. Also, after I became an in-service teacher, I have attended some talks about classroom management on Teachers Professional Development Day. For measures of giving feedback, I haven't participated in any talks about that but I think I gained some experience when I taught students.

Participant: T 03

Background or demographic questions

1. How many years have you been an in-service teacher in local primary school(s)?

19 years.

2. Have you taken any course(s) related to strategies of giving feedback and classroom management?

Regarding the strategies of giving feedback, I have never taken any courses specifically about 'strategies of giving feedback'. However, I have studied the courses about classroom management. Although my major in undergraduate was not education, I have taken some courses about classroom management in my PDGE programme. Now, I am taking a professional diploma of classroom management which is organized by The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research.

Participant: T 04

Background or demographic questions

1. How many years have you been an in-service teacher in local primary school(s)?

10 years.

2. Have you taken any course(s) related to strategies of giving feedback and classroom management?

Regarding the strategies of giving feedback, I have not attended any workshops. For classroom management, I think this is an important issue and topic in Education, I have taken some courses at The Institute of Education when I studied my undergraduate and I also attended some workshops about classroom management organized by Education Bureau during Teacher Professional Development Day.