

## Professional Development of EFL Teachers through Rotatory Peer Supervision

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### Abstract

Supervision in Iranian private language schools is carried out by one experienced teacher supervisor with too much authority. This paper reports a novel model of supervision, namely rotatory peer-supervision, in which supervision is delegated to English as foreign language (EFL) teachers themselves. In rotatory supervision, experienced teachers take turns observing each other's classes and those of their less experienced colleagues and providing constructive feedback. In this study, we investigated the possibility of employing teachers as supervisors and analyzed what they focused and what type of supervisory feedback they provided. While observing their peers' classes on a rotatory basis for 16 sessions, four experienced teachers evaluated their peer's teaching performance using a researcher-made classroom observation checklist after receiving a sandwich course on providing constructive supervisory feedback. Their evaluative comments were categorized in terms of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions. The findings revealed that the teacher-supervisors offered compliments much more than criticisms and suggestions. Moreover, critical comments were offered using non-accusatory, mitigated, and face-saving language. This study calls for further recognition of rotatory peer supervision as a viable alternative to the practiced models and further research on this under-researched topic.

*Keywords:* EFL teachers, compliments, criticisms, professional development, rotatory peer supervision, suggestions.

### Introduction

Today, many changes have been attributed to educational settings in which the so-called relationship between the people in charge within those settings have widely been shifted; that is, the relationships have been based upon shared responsibilities rather than obeying a single authority figure (Telem, 1998). There are different characteristics attributed to teachers' *supervision* and *evaluation* which have complementary roles towards each other and both are necessary in the teaching-learning processes (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2008; Nolan & Hoover, 2005; Pawlas & Oliva, 2007). Supervision can enhance the people in charge (teachers as well as students) professionally and it is an organizational duty. Therefore, it is possible for all teachers to have the respon-

sibilities of supervisors, without taking into account their duties within the organization they are working in. On the other hand, teachers' evaluation is a kind of formal assessment which takes teachers' overall abilities into account; it is a kind of rating teachers. The evaluator evaluates the teachers regarding their skills in fulfilling the requirements of the school or institute they are working at; hence, the evaluator may observe the classes as well (Glickman, et al., 2008; Nolan, et al., 2005; Pawlas & Oliva, 2007).

So far, the effect of evaluation has remained indirect and has not yet been fully known (Ebmeier, 2003). The way of dealing with this issue in order to turn to a successful one has not been determined as a fully-fledged academic methodology because many relative effects exist regarding the idea under investigation (Peterson, 2000; Good & Weaver, 2003). According to Cubberley (1929), one major kind of supervision is evaluatory supervision in which teachers are rated, the rater talks about what is wrong and what is good in teachers' classes. The way of evaluating teachers' performance makes teachers become more efficacious or vice versa (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Stronge, 1997), thereby improving the process of education in the long run (Teddlie, Stringfield, & Burdett, 2003) and increasing the achievements of students (Ebmeier, 2003; Ellett & Teddlie, 2003; Ovando, 2001; Stronge, 1997). The supervisory feedback in teacher education is widely acknowledged for its importance (e.g., Baniabdelrahman, 2004; Wilkins-Canter, 1997) as a major source of knowledge about teaching for the teachers (Russell, 1979) and guidance for their professional development. The supervisory feedback may threaten the public self-image of the teacher (Vasquez, 2004) because it may involve some evaluation of the teacher's teaching performance which often needs improvement. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to find out what feedback can be well received by the teachers. For the supervisory feedback to be effective in leading to a change in teachers' classroom practice, it should be well received by the teachers at whom it is directed. Supervision in Iranian private language schools is almost always carried out by one experienced supervisor teacher with too much authority. This paper reports a novel approach to supervision, namely *rotatory peer-supervision*, in which supervision is delegated to EFL teachers themselves.

### Review of the Literature

Supervision can be regarded as a broad term taking all aspects of life into account. Wiles (1967) advocated the point that the act of supervision is not something for individual benefits; rather, it is the act of a group of people's work negotiating on a process by which they can improve the existing situation and provide a base for all the staff to grow their skills. Sullivan and Glanz (2000) pointed out that at earlier times supervision was an act of finding faults by observing a teacher's classroom. By this very definition, supervision equated to inspection which is well put by Blumberg (1980) in his book entitled "Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War". Supervision is for all the personnel at schools including the teachers, administrators and other people in charge (Duke, 1987). On the other hand, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) considered supervision as a way of helping teachers as well as the supervisors themselves to improve their overall skills by being aware of their problems. Gebhard (1990, p. 1) defined supervision in teacher education "as an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher's classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction". Ryan (2004, p. 44) makes it clearer by stating that "supervision is an

inquiry into practice. It is a compassionate appreciative inquiry ... In supervision, we re-write the stories of our own practice ... supervision interrupts practice. It wakes us up to what we are doing”.

Supervision is an evaluative process which can lead to some improvements within the area of education. It has been categorized into several models the most important of which are: a) *supervision as inspection* takes teachers' committed errors into account and marks them as qualified or unfit for the job (Payne, 1875; Spears, 1953); b) *democratic supervision* refers to working collaboratively in order to improve the educational process (Pajak, 1993); c) *supervision as leadership*, as pointed out by Leeper (1969), makes teachers develop some democracy in the interactions with the instructors to determine goals which both parties accept, and they should also try to build a professional leadership; d) *clinical supervision* proposes some prescriptions set by supervisors to be implemented by the teachers within the classroom in a cooperatively designed manner (Cutcliffe, Butterworth, & Proctor, 2001); e) *changing concepts model* takes alternative methods of supervision into account (i.e., developmental supervision in the early 1980s, transformational leadership in the late 1980s, and then teachers take part in some decision making processes) (Glickman, 1992). In general, the supervisors provide their comments in three moves of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions. In the light of speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Leech, 1997; Searle, 1969), a compliment is defined as a comment that points out one positive aspect in the teacher's lesson, a suggestion as a specific recommendation to improve a certain part in the lesson, and a criticism as a remark pinpointing an undesirable aspect.

Supervision has been examined from a diverse range of aspects. Hart (1929) looked at it from the standpoint of supervised teachers and wanted to analyze frequencies, aims, and contribution of supervision in the process of instruction as well as the perceptions of those who were supervised. The results showed that there was a request for more supervision visits, and it is desirable for teachers to hold post-observation conferences in order to improve instruction rather than showing some ratings. Jones (1995) studied democratic supervision with the purpose of investigating the practicality and the effectiveness of applying democratic supervision in improving instruction and found that democratic supervision contributes to the improvement of supervision. Hayes and Wetherill (1996) studied teacher's perceptions of collaboration and clinical supervision in order to examine collaboration by exploring teachers' perceptions on clinical supervision. They found that collaboration leads to improvements and changes in instruction which was attributed to the development of trust. Lam (2001) examined educators' attitudes to classroom observation as a means of professional development and appraisal and found that participants prefer peer coaching, believing that appraisal incites pressure among teachers. Usher and Carss (2014) studied professional learning and development through returning lecturer supervisions. They found that there should be a good relationship between the supervisor and the supervisees. Moreover, the participants of the study had a positive attitude towards the supervision approach they received.

Jay and Johnson (2002) explored various facets of reflection with respect to teaching (i.e., a more specific and concrete look at the pedagogy of reflection) and provided a typology designed to guide teacher educators in teaching reflection to pre-service teachers which can be named as descriptive, comparative, and critical. Courneya, Pratt, and Collins (2008) investigated the perspectives in judging the teaching of peers. They made use of films within workshops. In those films, two expert teachers were teaching and

the participants were supposed to rate them. The results indicated that all the teachers gave full score to the teacher whose teaching methods were similar to theirs. Therefore, they contended that peers observe each other with pre-conceived notions about the best ways of teaching. Copland (2010) investigated the causes of tension in post-observation feedback. He took pre-service teachers into account and utilized field notes, audio and video recordings of feedback moves from two courses, as well as interview sessions. He reported that the first cause of tension was peer feedback, and the second cause of tension was reflection on practice among those participants within the study. The attitudes of supervised teachers were surveyed by Kayaoglu (2012) who found that supervision has no specific value regarding professional development and teachers' performance was not positively affected. Chamberlin (2000) suggested that, in many cases, teachers with opposing expectations may feel dissatisfied with a "reflective" rather than "evaluative" post-observation meeting (p. 355). Very often, what teachers expect to receive from the post-observation meeting is a balance of positive appraisal and constructive criticism.

Moreover, in the context of teaching and learning, the evaluation of the teaching performance by peers is expected to augment pedagogical components significantly. Peer evaluation is always seen as one of the most challenging tasks for teachers (Alarcão & Tavares, 2003). Formosinho, Machado, and Oliveira-Formosinho (2010, p.107) noted that the scenario of supervision underscores "the supporting roles, listening, active collaboration on agreed goals through contracts, involvement in daily educational activities, and reflected experimentation through action that seeks to respond to the identified problem".

Regarding the issue of appraisal of teachers and teacher supervision, Gebhard (1984, 1990) and Wallace (1991) proposed the idea of collaborative supervision within their models. Gebhard (1984) proposed five models of language teacher supervision as "direct supervision", alternative supervision, non-directive supervision, collaborative supervision, and creative supervision. On the other hand, Wallace (1991) suggested prescriptive supervision and collaborative supervision. As the name denotes, prescriptive supervision gives too much authority to the supervisor, and the supervisees' implemented skills within the classroom are judged by that single supervisor. Meanwhile, in this model, the supervisor is not an outsider but a figure who tries to foster supervisee autonomy. Additionally, Wallace (1991) points out that collaborative supervision can enhance the supervisee's affective factors and induce long term development (see Ali, 2007; Chamberlin, 2000; Stoller, 1996).

Taking into account the premises of collaborative supervision, the role of feedback in supervising teachers has always been important (Oprandy, 1999; Roberts, 1998), and most of the studies on language teacher supervision have concentrated on the discourse of observation and the provided feedback (Bailey, 2006; Gholami, Sarkhosh, & Abdi, 2016; Hooton, 2008; Wajnryb, 1994; 1995; 1998; Wallace & Woolger, 1991).

According to Bailey (2006), supervisors' comments on the supervisees' performance within the classroom is often a demanding job since the supervisor is sometimes going to deliver some negative and unwanted notes. Bailey (2006) suggests that the supervisors are sometimes engaged with the idea of face-saving and face-threatening issues when giving feedback to supervisees, and therefore, they often mitigate their discourse regarding the delivery of criticism to the supervisees (Wajnryb, 1994; 1995; 1998).

As this brief review of the literature illustrates, there has been a lot of attention to research studies on supervision and different effects and models of supervision. Moreover,

the major concern of the studies on supervisory feedback has mostly been centered on what a single supervisor does in classes, what comments they offer in terms of three moves of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions (Courneya, et al., 2008; Lam, 2001; Thies-Sprinthal, 1984). Even in the models proposed by Gebhard (1984, 1990) and Wallace (1991) regarding collaborative supervision, there is no sign of collaboration within the task of supervision. They have just taken into account the nature of providing feedback to the supervisees.

Through this study, we are suggesting an alternative model of supervision, namely *rotatory peer supervision* in which teachers supervise each other. By rotatory supervision, we mean that (experienced) teachers take turns observing each other's classes and providing constructive supervisory feedback in written and/or oral modes. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there has not been any study in the literature in which teachers are assigned to supervise one another on a regular and flowing basis, and this mode of supervision has eluded researchers' attention. However, given the ever-growing popularity of scaffolding, peer feedback, and peer observation notions in both teacher training and language learning environments, rotatory peer supervision, as a promising line of research in supervision, seems to be a viable measure in line with these theoretical trends and is worth to be tried out for professional development of teachers.

## Method

### Context of the Study and Participants

This study was conducted at a private language school in Naghadeh, a small town in the North-West of Iran. As a common practice and procedure, the teachers in this school have been recruited after taking part a crash teacher training course, and as their corporate policy (Richards, 2002), the institute vigorously promoted adherence to the tenets of communicative and interaction-based frameworks of language teaching. The participating teachers had BA, MA, and PhD in English language teaching. Through convenience sampling, 12 male and female teachers were randomly selected to take part in this study as main participants of the study with supervisee or supervisor roles. The teachers' ages ranged from 24 to 40 and their years of teaching experience varied from three to fifteen years. Not all the 12 teachers necessarily acted as supervisors, but all of them were supervised in a rotatory manner. Out of this pool, four teachers with minimum five years of teaching experience and respective educational credentials in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) (one teacher with BA, two with MA and one with PhD in TEFL) were selected based on purposive sampling.

The textbooks used within the institute were World English series by (Johannsen, Milner, & Tarver Chase, 2010) for adults, First Friends (Iannuzzi, 2013), and Family and Friends series (Simmons, Thompson, & Quintana, 2010) for young learners and teens. Each book in these series was covered in three to five semesters based on the language learners' levels. The prevailing methodology in the institute was to adhere to communicative methodology and methodological instructions, activities, and materials in teachers' guides. A substantial share of the course assessment was allocated to classroom participation scoring.

There was an institute assigned supervisor who had announced visits to classes and had always held post-observation conference meetings after the visits. However, based

on the anecdotal evidence from one to one short interviews with the teachers and two short focus group interviews with two smaller groups of teachers from the research site, it was felt that this type of feedback was not as constructive as it should be, and has become more routine and repetitive. Even some of the surveyed teachers adopted a confrontational approach to some of the comments they had received in post-observation conferences. Given this and the objectives of this study, it was decided that this research site looks to be an optimal context to try out the idea of rotatory peer supervision and how teachers help themselves in action.

### Procedure and Data Analysis

As part of a larger study which examines rotatory peer supervision from multiple aspects, this qualitative case study examined the professional development through rotatory peer supervision where EFL teachers supervise each other's classes. There were four teachers acting out as supervisors. Each teacher-supervisor observed four of his/her colleagues' classes and was asked to provide constructive supervisory feedback in written form. All these supervisors and teachers were invited to voluntarily participate in this research, and their formal consents as teacher-supervisors, observed teachers, or both were elicited. The teachers acting as supervisors received a crash-course on providing constructive supervisory feedback, and sandwich feedback. In this type of feedback, comments are shaped in the order and load of *strengths* (compliments) followed by *areas for improvement* (i.e., constructive criticisms and suggestions) and are rounded off with some summative or re-echoing of strengths (i.e., compliments) (see Daniels, 2009; Von Bergen, Bressler, & Campbell, 2014). Opportunities were given to the participating teachers to simulate peer-to-peer scaffolding and constructive feedback teacher report completion with the use of a classroom observation checklist devised for this purpose. To this end, they watched two video clips of their colleagues' classes (one adult class and one young learners' class) while jotting down the three feedback moves of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions in the checklist. Later, they shared their constructive feedback in the class and brainstormed on the comment types, their sequence and weight, and the best language to word and express them with the assistance of the second researcher of the study who had a rich experience of teacher supervision, supervisory board management, and teacher training background. Throughout the course, the would-be supervisor teachers simulated offering constructive feedback to each other's micro-teaching practices similar to those in the language school where they were to practice rotatory peer supervision. Moreover, with the purpose of enriching their knowledge on the topic, they were also supplied with the relevant literature on giving constructive supervisory feedback and the appraisal of teacher performance to the supervisees (Bailey, 2006; Wragg, 1999; Von Bergen, et al., 2014). In addition, as evident in Table 2, one checklist for supervision developed by the second author for classroom observation purposes in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs and MA practicum courses in TEFL was made available to the teacher-supervisors to draw upon in crafting their feedback reports in terms of compliments, constructive criticisms, and suggestions during classroom observation and on-the-spot teacher performance appraisal. Table 1 provides some sample extracts of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions given by teacher-supervisors of the present study in the respective columns for the three moves.

Table 1  
Data Categorization of Constructive Feedback Moves

Constructive Feedback Moves	Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3
Compliments	<i>Teacher's pronunciation and volume was good</i>	<i>The teacher was absolutely great at designing the ways of group working</i>	<i>The teacher managed the class setting and overall management in a perfect manner</i>
Criticisms	<i>The teacher needs to be more fluent</i>	<i>Although he tried to adapt himself to the learners' language level, he still needs some sorts of further practice.</i>	<i>The teacher failed to control the students, and they frequently interrupted the discussions.</i>
Suggestions	<i>The teacher should utilize specified time for each activity and prepare a lesson plan before the class-time</i>	<i>The class would be better managed if the teacher adds some more fun to the class</i>	<i>It is better for her to make use of specific types of cooperative learning in order to increase learnability.</i>

It should be noted that the same instrument has widely been in use by authority-figure supervisors in a highly accredited private language institute in Tabriz, Iran. Following the orientation program, teacher-supervisors were assigned to observe four sessions of their different colleagues' classes and provide constructive supervisory feedback (CSF) after each session. Afterwards, following Anderson and Radencich (2001), Bowman (2001), Glenn (2006), Izadi (2016), and Murdoch (2000), the teacher-supervisors' written feedback reports and comments on the checklist were analyzed and categorized in terms of the proportions of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions based on the checklist. Moreover, their overall comments at the end of the checklist was further analyzed by the researchers, and further instances of value-laden comments concerning the three feedback moves were identified and added to their own lists in the checklist. Frequencies and percentages of the comments for each move from 16 completed observation reports in relation to the observation criteria of the checklist are then reported and discussed. To establish inter-coder reliability, both researchers independently tabulated the comments in this part, and the rate of agreement was found to be high ( $K=0.91$ ). Both raters discussed the discrepancies in categorization which happened most often in the cases of suggestions or criticisms until they reached an agreement.

## Results

This study is aimed at investigating rotatory peer supervision in action and account for the rates of compliments, criticisms and suggestions experienced teachers provide to their colleagues following the observation of their classes while drawing upon a classroom observation and evaluation checklist often used by sole supervisors in Iran. Table 2 indicates a representative sample of three major types of constructive feedback given by these rotatory supervisors based on their 16 checklist-prompted observations reports. It is noteworthy that some of the instances may look like suggestions, but they are included in criticisms as the teacher supervisors themselves noted them in criticism column of the checklist.

Table 2

*Sample Extracts of Compliments, Criticisms, and Suggestions in Rotatory Teacher Supervisions*

Observation Criteria	Compliments	Criticisms	Suggestion
Teacher's proficiency (pronunciation, accuracy, fluency, appropriacy)	– Teacher's pronunciation and volume was good, – Excellent.	The teacher needs to be more fluent.	It is better if he could work a bit on his fluency.
Class management	The teacher managed the class setting and overall management in a perfect manner.	The teacher failed to control the students, and they frequently interrupted the discussions.	The teacher can assign some language learners as co-teachers to help her.
Level adaptation (teacher talk)	The teacher was good enough to be comprehensible to the learners.	Although he tried to adapt himself to the learners' language level, he still needs some sorts of practice.	She should take into account the language levels and improve her speaking skills to be adapted to high-level classes (here IELTS).
Sequence and pace of materials and activities/Time management	There was a well-structured lesson plan and the teacher pursued it.	All the time was given to work-book without letting the students get involved.	The teacher should utilize specified time for each activity and prepare a lesson plan before the class-time.
Pair/group work	The teacher was absolutely great at designing the ways of group working.	There wasn't enough pair/group work.	It is better for her to make use of specific types of cooperative learning in order to increase learnability.
Corrective feedback	She provided fair and to the point constructive feedback.	The provided feedback was vague rather than being constructive.	In this class, the teacher should have used written corrective feedback because the learners were paper based rather than orally oriented.
L1 use	She is perfect at managing the words English so as to be comprehensible for the learners. L1 usage is in the lowest rate possible.	Before providing any specific examples in order to clarify the meanings of the instructions or vocabularies, he provides the students with Farsi equivalents as the first resort.	—
Command of the teaching materials and lesson preparation/planning	She is good at teaching the materials in the specified sequence within her lesson plan.	It seemed he was jumping from one page to the other.	—

*Sequel to Table 2 see on the next page.*

Sequel to Table 2.

Discipline/Class management	The teacher had the class in hand ( <i>was in charge of the class</i> ) and the students were following the rule implemented by the teacher.	The climate of the class was really cold despite the fact that they were silent within the classroom.	The class would be more fruitful by adding some fun to the class.
STT vs. TTT	The teacher allocated most of the class time to the students.	There was little STT and TTT was mostly in L1.	The teacher should allocate more time to students and he should act as a guide instead of telling most of the comments and explanations.
Classroom climate/sense of humor/fun	There was a formal class blended by a very good amount of humor.	The teacher had a poker face.	The class would be better managed if the teacher adds some more fun to the class.
Student involvement (all sts)	The students were involved in most of the activities on an equal basis.	The teacher could have involved all the students; there were some silent students not being engaged by the teacher.	—
Use of relia, personal life examples, schematic knowledge activation	The teacher brought so many real objects to the classroom and narrated some personal experience. At the same time, she utilized previously covered lessons to make the new lesson clearer.	The only material used in the classroom was the book.	The teacher could add some pictures and videos from YouTube.
Adherence to Institute Guidelines & Term Programs	The teacher was in line with the syllabus provided by the institute.	The teacher did not teach the grammar according to the way provided by the supervisor in the teachers' meeting.	—
Teacher's mobility/use of whiteboard	She used the white board very often and the way she stands in front of it was perfect.	The teacher could not see the students while writing on the whiteboard.	The teacher should study the book written by Adrian Doff in which the way of using whiteboard correctly is taken into account.
Teacher's optimal use of audio-visual facilities	She was great at using the existing facilities.	No audio-visual use.	It was better to use more visual materials instead of using only listening activities.
Elicitation/questioning	He tried to elicit the answers by continuous questions instead of giving an answer by himself.	He immediately provided the answers.	The teacher could make the questions easier by tearing it into parts.

Sequel to Table 2 see on the next page.

Instructions/mode- ling	The teacher made use of many exam- ples; a kind of inductive way of teaching grammar.	The instructions were ambiguous for the students.	The teacher could provide more examples and give time to the students to do the exercises.
Teacher as one communicator	Not at all. All the students were free to raise questions, and there was a good debate on what the students were asking each other.	She didn't let the students com- mence the conversations or raise their own ideas on some specific debates.	He needs to work more on that.
Rapport/mutual respect	Both the teacher and the students were so respectful to each other.	—	—
Presentation (warm- up/topic activation + teaching)>>practice >> proceduralize>> feedback/ assessment	Great warm up.	He just jumped to do the work book without any preparation.	It'll be a good idea to follow the PPP sequence to have a better prepared class with better results.
Peer feedback/colla- borative tasks	Great. The teacher let the students give peer feedback at appropriate times.	The only person responsible for the feedback was the teacher herself.	It will be a good idea to make the learners write their peers' errors and then discuss them at the end of the class.
Appearance/posture, voice, tone, eye contact, punctuality	Lovely tone and perfect eye contact to cover all the students.	She was late and embarrassed.	—
Creativity/initiatives	He was great at offering various activities.	There were few situations in which the teacher used new subjects or materials.	The teacher can make the class more excited by surprising the students offering some new games or activities at the time of the class.
Formative assess- ment (CP scores)	The students are tested continuously and the teacher clarifies the next session activities based on the results obtained from the tests.	—	He needs to assess and analyze the students' knowledge continuously and specify their weak points.

In order to delve further into the exact areas of the observation criteria within the checklist, the researchers tabulated the data in order to rank the highest numbers of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions vis-à-vis the observation criteria in the checklist (Table 3).

Table 3  
*Ranked Order of Compliments, Criticisms, and Suggestions in Relation to Key Observation Criteria*

Ranks	Compliments	Criticisms	Suggestions
1	Teachers proficiency (10)	Teacher's optimal use of audio-visual facilities (8)	Time management, STT Vs. TTT, Elicitation, Formative assessment, and Pair work (6)
2	Class management and Teacher's mobility (9)	Level adaptation, classroom climate, and STT Vs. TTT (6)	Teacher's proficiency, Level adaptation, Corrective feedback, and Peer feedback (5)
3	Level adaptation, Appearance/Posture, STT Vs. TTT, Teacher's optimal use of audio-visual facilities, Teacher as one communicator, Mutual respect, PPP, and Creativity (8)	L1 use, Elicitation, and peer feedback (4)	Use of realia, Teacher's mobility, Teacher's optimal use of audio-visual facilities, Instructions, Teacher as one communicator, PPP, Creativity, Class management, Classroom climate (1)
4	Discipline, Classroom climate, and Student involvement (7)	Pair work, Planning, Student involvement, Use of realia, Instructions, and Appearance/Posture (3)	—
5	Time management, Corrective feedback, L1 use, Planning, Use of realia, Adherence to institute guidelines, and Elicitation (6)	Teacher proficiency, Class management, Time management, Corrective feedback, Adherence to institute guidelines, Teacher's mobility, Teacher as one communicator, PPP, and Creativity (1)	—
6	Instructions (3)	—	—
7	Pair work, Peer feedback, and Formative assessment (2)	—	—

Table 3 provides further information on the frequencies of each observation criterion in classroom observation checklists. The table reveals that regarding compliments, *Teachers proficiency*, *Class management and Teacher's mobility*, *Level adaptation and Appearance/Posture* received ten, eight, and seven comments, respectively. The highest number of criticisms went to *Teacher's optimal use of audio-visual facilities*, with five comments, and *Level adaptation, classroom climate, and STT Vs. TTT* with four comments. Based on this table, there are few suggestions compared to the other two moves. *Time management, STT Vs. TTT, Elicitation, Formative assessment, and Pair work* with six suggestions each were areas receiving the highest number of suggestions. There were no instances of criticisms concerning *Formative assessment* and *Mutual respect*. On the other hand, no teacher-supervisor provided suggestions regarding *L1 use, Plan-*

ning, Student involvement, Adherence to institute guidelines, Mutual respect, and Appearance/Posture. The findings also revealed that the only criterion which has not been given any suggestions and criticisms is *Mutual respect*. This can be traced back to Izadi's (2016) idea regarding over-politeness of Iranian teachers and students as well as the underlying policy within the context of Iran.

Based on the findings in Table 3, we then estimated the overall distribution of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions in terms of frequency and percentage as illustrated in Figure 1. Analyses of the data revealed that the frequencies of the compliments were 172, criticisms 65, and suggestions 59 (see Figure 1 for their percentage).

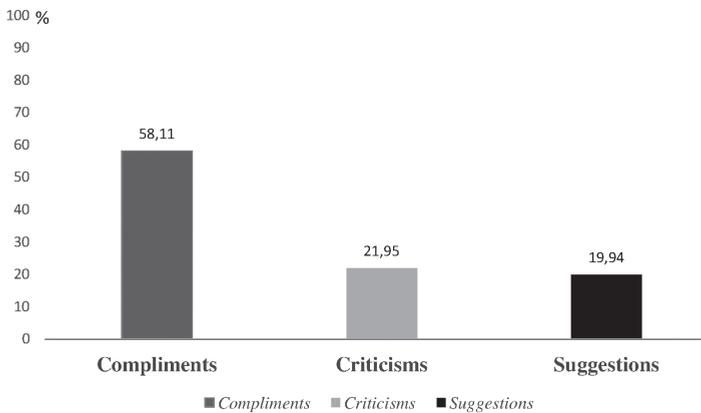


Figure 1. Overall distribution of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions in percentage

As the findings reveal, compliments constituted the highest rate of comments (almost 60%), while fairly similar proportions of criticisms and suggestions were offered to the supervisees by the teacher-supervisors in this study.

## Discussion

The previous research on teacher-supervisors accounted for the supervisory comments given to EFL teachers through the lenses of one single supervisor (Alarcão, 2009; Bradley & Kottler, 2001; Schön, 1987; 1983). However, this study was an attempt to see how teachers provide professional constructive feedback to their colleagues in the same workplace. The results revealed that the teacher-supervisors tended more to provide some positive constructive feedback regarding their colleagues' overall teaching and favored the supply of compliments more than criticisms and suggestions. One plausible explanation for the distribution of comments in our data could be that the supervisor teachers were compelled to be over-polite to their colleagues. This finding seems to be congruent with that of Izadi (2016) who found that over-polite evaluations constitute professional discourses and Persian cultural practices at times could even conflate with professional practices due to over-politeness. As was the case in the present study, professional discourses are places where individuals face a conflict of professional roles and the wider societal roles. Over-politeness could hinder the judicious delivery of criticisms and suggestions, and at the same time an issue which justifies the abundance of compliments among the given comments.

The higher rate of compliments in teacher-supervisors' comment could be related to the over-use or under-use of face-saving and face-threatening strategies (Bailey, 2006). The supervising teachers in this study may have had reservations on giving too many criticisms due to their social relationship with their peers. Nonetheless, they were not the sole praise-providers. They tapped their colleagues' areas of problems by criticizing them for what they did and also by suggesting some new and helpful ways to make them develop professionally. It is noteworthy that, in line with Wajnryb (1994, 1995, & 1998), even at the time of criticism, the teacher-supervisors have tried to mitigate their criticism voices (e.g., *"Although he tried to adapt himself to the learners' language level, he still needs some sorts of practice"*, *"The teacher could have involved all the students; there were some silent students not being engaged by the teacher"*).

The present study discloses valuable results regarding the idea of peer-to-peer scaffolding and teacher constructive feedback by which the teacher-supervisors have tried their best not to demotivate their colleagues by just highlighting problematic areas. This study revealed a sense of empathy among the participants, by which the supervisors transformed and toned down the beliefs about the unwelcome visitor and bad face of supervision by rotatory peer-to-peer supervision. They showed that they are supervising the classes not only to tap problems but also to encourage their colleagues to keep on the good job, and at the same time provide a wake-up call and make them reform some existing problems within their classes. The findings of this study were consistent with those of other studies which considered a number of strategies to be effective in providing constructive feedback in teacher education contexts, such as namely the use of questions (Vásquez & Reppen, 2007), compliment delivery before criticisms or suggestions (Anderson, 1997; Anderson & Radencich, 2001; Bowman, 2001; Glenn, 2006; Murdoch, 2000), offering mild advice and suggestions (Vásquez, 2004), leading the interns to pinpoint their own problems (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), provision of a comfortable atmosphere for the feedback conferences (McGlenn, 2003), and striking a balance between positive and negative comments (e.g., Glenn, 2006; Murdoch, 2000) in feedback delivery. The findings of the present study are also consistent with Khalili's (2016) study. He investigated the way of delivery of compliments, criticisms, and suggestions in his study. Unlike our study, Khalili's study took into account the comments provided by one single supervisor. He found out that the supervisor had the desire to create positive feelings for the teachers by starting with something good before providing criticisms and suggestions to develop teachers' confidence. At the same time, he also found that the supervisor mitigated his tone of criticisms. This instance taken from his findings illustrates this: "I was thinking maybe the first exercise was a little bit slow" (Khalili, 2016, p. 41).

### Conclusion

The study examined the three moves of compliments, criticisms and suggestions in rotatory peer-to-peer supervision. These moves could be utilized by the supervisors to promote the effectiveness of their feedback in the practice of rotatory peer supervision. This study found that the teacher supervisors did their best to create a supportive atmosphere in the feedback reports with a remarkable share of the feedback packaged in a way to bolster their empathy and support to the teacher when the class conduct at times went against the supervisor teachers' expectations. To sum up, the results of this study revealed that teacher-supervisors promoted their colleagues' professional development

by providing constructive feedback through the checklists with a judicious juggling among the three moves of compliments, suggestions, and criticisms. Moreover, the analysis of the observation checklists revealed that teacher-supervisors gave compliments at a higher rate and used intensifiers (e.g., “*The teacher was absolutely great at designing the ways of group working.*”) to enhance the positive force of their compliments. Besides, the supervisors were very careful in delivering criticisms, and used mitigators to soften their writing styles. The present study shed more light to supervisory practices via the use of the checklists provided for the teacher-supervisors with which they could raise their compliments, suggestions, and criticisms in order to make the supervised teachers develop professionally. The findings in this study could inform policy makers and education managers on the potentials of peer-to-peer constructive teacher feedback. Rotatory peer supervision deserves more attention, and we hope that this study could be of help in institutionalizing this type of supervision as one option among other supervision models in the professional development of teachers.

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