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**The Impact of Teacher Reflection via Recording of EFL Speaking
Classes on the Quality of Language Teaching and Acquisition (Turkish
University Prep-School Students)**

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Introduction

Speaking skills are regarded to be major skills while learning a new language. It is a general expectation of all learners to use the vocabulary and grammar rules they have learnt in the correct way in order to speak in the target language. English learners experience the same situation, and they want to efficiently speak in English. However, foreign language learning and also teaching is not as simple as some students and teachers may contemplate. It requires much effort, and mutual desire and support of teachers and students.

The tendency to prioritize the mastery of speaking is reflected in the tendency of society to make speaking skills as a measure of one's mastery of English. Speaking is of primary importance (no speaking today means no communicative mastery of a language), it is the basis of reading and writing skills.

In fact, many students consider language fluency to communicate orally with others as more important than the ability to read or write (Nazara, 2011). Speaking is regarded as the most important and difficult skill among Turkish students; it reflects the mastery of students in language acquisition. Realizing the great importance of speaking skills in EFL programs, it is very important to find and use the best instructional methods, materials, activities, media and other requirements that will help learners master the speaking skills (Nazara, 2011).

Success is the development of speaking skills that largely depends on the teacher. Thus, the purpose of this study is to use video recording to improve teacher performance in speaking classes.

Reflective teaching is a contemporary and highly approved method that teachers use to provide self-awareness in their professional development. As part of reflective teaching, 'reflective practice' refers to the steps to be followed to achieve self-reflection and includes the action phase. The term *reflective practice*, coined by Schon (1987), focuses on the ways people think about their experiences and formulate responses as the experiences happen. This approach makes a clear distinction between "thinking on action" and "thinking in action". Thinking on action is the way of analyzing experiences as they happen while thinking in action determines how responses are formulated (Krause, 2004 cited in Clarke, 2007, p.2).

Video recording of classes helps teachers during the process of reflective practice, as one of the well-known approaches of reflective teaching, besides the written reports of self and the peer observation. Video recording is becoming an efficacious observational process, especially for EFL teachers in the recent years. First of all, watching video promotes a self-look at the teaching and learning processes that happen in the classroom. Watching the video recordings of

classes helps teacher to critically observe and examine the teaching methods of self, the behaviors of the students and the classroom management. Also it is an easy method to keep records for self and to use them later in order to compare the teaching actions. Besides, videos provide an objective assessment of self and others. Teachers themselves or others (colleagues, parents, school administration) may directly see the recordings instead of using written self-reports or peer observation evaluations.

While EFL teachers may use video recording for various educative reasons and for the observation of different types of lessons and classes, in this research study, the video recording method is used to observe English speaking classes at Turkish universities in the preparation classes.

Reflective teaching has already proved to be a successful method for individual practice of teachers, even though it has been used only the last few decades. Osterman (1990, p.134) wrote that reflection is “the mindful consideration of one’s actions, specifically, one’s professional action”. In other words, it is the realization of self-observation and self-assessment which elevates the teacher to a self-criticism. The reflective practice is the process of implementation of reflective thinking and teaching together. By the use of reflective practice, the teacher aims to achieve professional development and to extend this ability into the classroom.

Video recording of classes is among the methods or approaches of reflective teaching which is used to ‘stimulate reflective practice’ (Wright, 2008, p. vi). Video-recorded reflection aims to provide an insight to the teaching methods of educators, and improve teacher methods. The video recording method also desires to motivate the teachers to develop their skills, classroom performance, and to evaluate themselves.

The study focuses on teacher development and the role of teacher in the acquisition by students of speaking skills. In this respect, the thesis envisages that video recording positively effects the quality of language teaching and acquisition.

As an observational and experimental study, the thesis research is carried out in the Preparatory School of a Turkish university, and views the case with three Turkish teachers of speaking and 56 students. Upon giving the theoretical framework of speaking skills, reflective teaching and video recording of EFL classes in the first chapter, the study continues to the second chapter with the practical implementation of the video-enhanced-reflection. The third chapter gives the details about the observation and the experiment, the analysis, the results and the conclusion. The research methods used are the video observation comments, teacher inquiry, peer comments, teacher and student questionnaires, student exam results.

With this research study, I intend to prove the practicality, success and impact of video recording for teacher reflection and language acquisition in EFL speaking classes. The findings of this study suggest that video recording of EFL classes is a beneficial, less time-consuming, very motivating tool for Turkish teachers of English and foreign / second language teachers worldwide to achieve self-assessment leading to better performance.

The problems stated in the study

Video recording of EFL classes is not a common means of self-evaluation for the teachers in Turkey. As part of reflective teaching, video recording is needed to be expanded for teachers' use in Turkey as well as in other countries.

In addition to this, teaching speaking requires so much effort from teachers and it is also so time consuming. Teachers need to motivate students, teach them the necessary structures and vocabulary, and then they desire students to be able to engage in at least simple communication. To allocate time for each student and to make them speak in class is obviously a difficult process. Video recording accompanied by self-observation and reflection is regarded as providing a mirror to control the process during speaking lessons, which helps teachers to see better their strengths and weaknesses.

Both in my teaching practice and during the experiment I could observe Turkish students facing considerable difficulties in speaking classes. While some of them are good at grammar, and others have an ample vocabulary, most of them avoid speaking English during the class time. One of the reasons of this is that they are too anxious not to make mistakes.

In this study I view the quality of Turkish students' English speaking skills as a serious problem. I also view as a grave problem of English language teaching the lack of teacher self-reflection and self-criticism, which, if used, would be able to help solve the above mentioned problem.

Since speaking skills are considered as major skills by both the teachers and students while learning a language, it is necessary to focus on speaking in EFL classes. However, it is realized that Turkish students often lack effective speaking skills, and as a result the communicative competence in a foreign language. Even though grammar and vocabulary teaching are fulfilled in a satisfactory way at schools, students do not use the productive skills at an expected level. The problem of Turkish students in speaking skills may be the result of either their own deficiency in communicative skills and reluctance towards speaking, or insufficient efforts of teachers in teaching speaking, their approach and the teaching methods.

The necessity of using video recording for teacher self-assessment combined with the importance of teaching speaking skills to Turkish students leads this study to focus on video recording method and the development of speaking skills.

The shortfall of teacher's self-assessment during video recording a speaking class triggered this study to research the teacher behaviors and teaching methods as well as the student behaviors.

The thesis problem statement which is defined and studied throughout the dissertation is:

Is video recording during EFL speaking classes effective for teacher reflection and improvement of teaching/learning?

In this respect, the research aims to investigate the impact of video recording for teacher reflection in speaking classes in the Turkish context.

The research questions, which are addressed to be answered, are:

- 1- Does video recording help teacher's self-reflection in EFL speaking classes more than other methods of self-reflection do?
- 2- Does teacher's self-reflection via video-recording eventually improve students' speaking skills and language acquisition?
- 3- Does video-recording of EFL speaking classes help students improve their speaking skills and language acquisition?

Goal of the research

The goal of this research is to find out the ways to improve teaching skills and methods of teaching in speaking classes, and indirectly to improve students' speaking skills and language acquisition. Based on the literature analysis, observation over the teaching process and the experiment, it is aimed to achieve this goal, and to highlight the effect of video recording of EFL classes in language teaching and acquisition.

Hypothesis of the research:

The hypothesis of this study is: Video recording method **POSITIVELY** influences teacher reflection in EFL speaking classes; as a result, both the quality of language teaching and the acquisition of speaking skills are increased.

The study proceeds around its goal and hypothesis from the first chapter till the experiment results' analysis and conclusion sections. During the observation and the experiment

phases of the last chapter, the teacher is expected to improve the teaching quality in the aspects of:

- the use of PPP method and the planning of the communicative activities
- the frequency of teacher talk-time
- the frequency of the teacher's use of L2
- motivating students to speak.

The improvement of speaking skills refers to:

- the relief from psychological concerns in speaking
- being motivated to speak in English
- the frequency of participation of students in speaking lessons
- the frequency of the use of L2 compared to L1 by students
- the use of target vocabulary and grammar taught in class
- improvement of the communicative competence, and ability to spontaneously express one's ideas.

Importance/Urgency of the research:

Application of video has been proven to be effective in teaching English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) for both young and adult learners. Video can be used in a variety of instructional settings - in classrooms, on distance-learning sites where information is broadcast to learners who interact with the facilitator via computer, and in self-study and evaluation situations. It can also be used in the teacher's personal and professional development or with students as a way of presenting content, initiating conversations, and providing illustrations for various concepts. Teachers and students can always create their own videotapes as content for the class or as a means to assess learners' performance (Rammal, 2005).

Reflective practice and video recording have been more emphasized in the last two decades and much more used in EFL classes worldwide. However, we believe that Turkish students lack speaking skills which are highly necessary for them to learn a foreign language, and in this regard Turkish teachers of English need to re-evaluate their teaching skills and methods as well as the efforts of students for their own progress.

This study argues that it is crucial to improve teaching skills and methods in speaking classes at Turkish schools. Most Turkish students acquire sufficient grammar and vocabulary to let them speak or at least utter some words or sentences for communicative purposes. Many

Turkish students receive enough years of English learning to get a pre-intermediate or intermediate level. However, it is widely recognized by teachers that even though Turkish students receive a sufficient amount of English language learning for many years, too many Turkish students have considerable speaking problems in L2.

The deficiency of Turkish students in speaking can be attributed to many reasons. There may be student factors such as not knowing enough grammar or vocabulary, defaults of pronunciation, lack of communicative strategies, having psychological problems like low motivation, shyness or anxiety, or teacher factors concerning teaching methods, skills and attitudes. There may be some other factors such as the speaking activities which are offered by course books that do not motivate students.

What usually the Turkish parents and the students say and complain about is that students are not given sufficient practice in speaking, as teaching is oriented on exams which do not involve a speaking section. This brings the idea that Turkish EFL teachers are largely responsible for the deficiency of English speaking skills problem in Turkey.

I do not mean that only Turkish students have difficulty in speaking English fluently, but I want to emphasize that the problem of English language teaching is especially acute in Turkey.

With the purpose of investigating whether the Turkish ELT teachers really apply relevant methods of teaching speaking in class and that they realize the problem of English speaking skills of Turkish students, this study has been held with Turkish teachers and students. Video recording, as a proved method of reflective teaching, was used to try to solve the problem since its potential, to my mind, is not sufficiently applied by Turkish educators.

I believe video recording will be helpful for teachers to do self-reflection and self-assessment in speaking classes. Besides, it will be useful to find out whether teacher reflection over the improvement of students' learning is really such a powerful tool.

Novelty

Many researches have been conducted to investigate the benefits of video recording for language teaching (Fell, 2008; Bagarukayo et al., 2011; Yoo et al, 2010). However, most of them investigate the student behaviors, their learning styles and environment. Some of these studies focus on the communicative function of the language use and speaking skills of students (Krohn, et al., 2010, Yoo et al, 2010). However, the effect of teaching methods, teaching styles, and the teachers' self-observation and evaluation, especially in teaching speaking, are not taken into consideration.

Likewise, there are many studies which take the problems in the development of speaking skills and students' needs into consideration, and also deal with the assessment ways of speaking (Murad, 2009), but there are few studies which focus on the teacher function in speaking classes, teachers' way of teaching, methods used and attitudes demonstrated.

Emphasizing the impact of teacher self-reflection on the quality of student learning, video recording of classes as an efficient tool of self-reflection, of observation of both the visible teacher and student behaviors and the invisible psychological and linguistic obstacles on the way to fluent speaking, also contributes to the novelty of research. Holding this research in the Turkish context (university prep schools) is its one more innovative aspect.

The study has chosen video-recording of EFL speaking classes as the most effective method of self-reflection in the process of teaching speaking, as the speaking process, as well as the speaking "product", unless somehow recorded, cannot be studied (in reading and writing we have the written text which permits research and reflection without any additional tools). To improve the teaching of other language skills, some other methods of self-reflection can be efficient, while for teaching speaking analysis video recordings are especially beneficial. However, I have not found researches dealing with this aspect of self-reflection.

Methods of Research

To solve the above-discussed problems, I applied the following methods of research:

- review and critical analysis of existing literature on the topic under study
- observation of the educational process via video recording
- teacher and student questionnaires
- experiment
- the analysis of the assessment results of the students' speaking skills
- comments of the peer teachers on video recordings
- statistical analysis of data obtained through questionnaires and experiment

Theoretical Value of Research

The dissertation analyzes the process of speaking skills' formation and functioning, factors of difficulties in speaking, assessment of speaking skills, reflective teaching, and class video recording as a tool for reflective practice. The author offers her view on these theoretical issues, and develops the existing views concerning the posed questions.

Self-reflection is described as a thinking process in which an individual seriously considers and thoughtfully judges prior experience of the self (Kong & et al., 2009). On the other hand, the impact of video recording for self-reflection on the formation of speaking skills, as suggested in the dissertation, is based both on student and teacher behavior, mistakes, difficulties and strategies.

Practical Value of Research

The recommendations given in the dissertation will be helpful for ELT teachers in Turkey and worldwide to improve their practices of teaching, in particular, of developing students' English speaking skills. It will help them to provide, according to the contemporary requirements, a more student-centered English language teaching. Chapter 2 contains many useful recommendations of self-assessment done with the help of video-recording and advice for implementation of self-inquiry. One of the appendices offers a useful implementation of self-inquiry and peer comments, as well. Both Chapter 2 and the analysis section convey the criteria to look for while-watching assessment of students' speaking skills and teacher's attitudes and methods.

Structure of Dissertation

The dissertation comprises an introduction, three chapters, conclusions and some appendices. In chapter 1, the literature on teaching speaking, reflective teaching and using video recording for teacher reflection and assessment are reviewed. In the second chapter, the methods of teaching speaking skills accompanied by video recording and also methods of self-assessment via video recording are analyzed. The third chapter describes the research held in two groups, experimental and control, correspondingly, with and without video-recording accompanied by reflection. There are 13 tables, 8 figures, and 5 appendices in the dissertation.

Brief Contents

Chapter 1- Speaking, Learner Autonomy and Reflective Teaching - Literature Review

In the first chapter the theoretical aspects and definitions of speaking skills, reflective teaching and video recording in language teaching are analyzed.

Many language learners regard speaking skills as the measure of knowing a language. They also assess their progress in language learning first of all in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

The mastery of speaking skills in English today is a priority for the majority of second or foreign language learners. Learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency. Oral skills have hardly been neglected in ESL/EFL courses (witness the huge number of conversation and other speaking course books in the market) in the recent decades, though how best to approach the teaching of oral skills has long been the focus of methodological debate (Richards, 2008).

Speaking skills are (at least psychologically) the most difficult skills to teach when compared to other skills, besides, they are also the most complex ones to assess. Audio and video-recordings are among the alternative assessment methods which are helpful for both teachers to assess student progress and students in their own self-assessment. This study focuses on the use of video recording for teacher development. However, in the recordings, the students' progress is also considered and evaluated.

During the last decade, the slogan of reflective teaching has been embraced by teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers all over the world. Reiman (1999) suggests that reflective teaching includes identifying personal meaning and/or significance of a classroom or school situation, and this includes the disclosure and examination of personal feelings (Minott, 2006).

The concept of reflective teaching stems from Dewey (1933) who contrasted 'routine action' with 'reflective action'. Reflective action involves willingness to engage in constant self-appraisal and development. There is another term that is frequently used to refer to the action process of reflective teaching that is the 'reflective practice'. Zeichner (1996) and Valli (1997) define reflective practice as an integral component of a teacher's classroom success.

Reflective teaching uses video-recording as part of reflective practice and the obtained video recordings as an important tool for the professional development of teachers. The use of video in educational applications has become more common in recent years (Hung, 2009). Video records can be used to highlight such aspects of classroom life that a teacher might not notice in the midst of carrying out a lesson (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2004; LeFevre, 2004).

The essential features of video recording method as a reflective teaching tool as viewed in the dissertation, are as follows. It:

- 1) provides objectivity for reflection,
- 2) offers abundance of time for reflective evaluation,
- 3) saves time for supervisor or colleague observation of a teacher,
- 4) can be replayed whenever needed,

- 5) is more accurate and deeper in analysis, and
- 6) is motivating for teachers.

Chapter 2. Methods of Teaching Speaking Skills Accompanied by Recording

The second chapter stresses the hypothesis of the study, and explains how to apply video recording in classes, in order to use it for self-reflection. All phases of video-recording and reflection have to be scrupulously planned in order to implement a successful observation. Observation is an important element of reflective practice. The reasons of classroom observation mainly include:

- student behavior
- student learning
- classroom interaction
- teacher behavior
- methods of teaching
- classroom management
- type of the lesson (listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary), and some other

The observation checklists and rubrics are important for the detection of speaking problems, and afterwards, for the evaluation of speaking skills.

The next step for teachers will be to plan the reflective practice. The planning phase of reflective practice is necessary for teachers since teachers need to find out their own strengths and weaknesses by following these steps:

- 1- watch the video to identify problems
- 2- reflect over problems and seek for solutions
- 3- try out the possible solutions
- 4- reflect over the obtained results
- 5- apply the best solution
- 6- reflect over the new recording
- 7- refine the best solution

These model steps for reflective practice are designed to be used by teachers; I used them in the experiment. While these steps compose the reflective part of the observation, the observation itself is fulfilled with the use of video recording. Teachers use some checklists, rubrics or questionnaires in order to detect students' and their own weaknesses. Teachers also question themselves with some reflective questions which are one of the most essential parts of reflective thinking and inquiry.

Next, teachers determine the measures that should be taken in order to improve teaching. Afterwards, they check the following recordings in order to see whether they have reached some target behaviors and actions.

The final analysis and evaluation needs to show progress in the actions; however, this progress does not have to be a total change. If the findings reflect some degree of positive change, the recordings accompanied by reflection will prove to be effective.

What is aimed at the end of the video recorded self-reflection is:

- 1) to improve teacher's:
 - a) attitude towards speaking as a skill and speaking activities
 - b) instructional methods
 - c) interaction with students at speaking classes
- 2) to detect students' problems and needs
- 3) to remediate students' attitude towards speaking
- 4) to see teacher's progress (or its absence) while teaching speaking

Chapter 3. Research on the Impact of Teacher Reflection via Recording of EFL Speaking Classes on the Quality of Language Teaching and Acquisition

The third chapter states the research methodology, design, data collection and analysis.

This study involves an **action research** for it involves my own interaction as a language teacher with students and colleagues in order to directly search and test the results on myself.

As a researcher, I wanted to see how my educational ideas would improve my own teaching skills and methods, and be beneficial for future studies and teachers. On the other hand, some subjectivity of an action research needs to be considered. In order to decrease the subjectivity of my comments, I consulted some colleagues and gathered their comments and ideas about my recordings. My questionnaires held with both students and teachers as well as students' oral exam results will somehow help eliminate this subjectivity, as well.

In this study, I used mixed methods of the **qualitative and quantitative approach** which were necessary for the interpretation of both statistical and observational data. The study is also **explanatory** in nature since it defines the characteristics of the phenomenon studied and depends on the analysis of the observations.

Observational research method and experimental research design was used to study the impact of video recording on teacher's reflective practices and to test the benefits of reflections on students' speaking skills and my (as a teacher) behavior observable in the video-recordings.

The experiment involved the application of video recording as the **independent variable** to provide self-reflection for the teacher. Students' success in speaking skills was the **dependent variable**.

Experiment:

The experiment was implemented in four groups: two control and two experimental (totally 66 students). Two teachers were involved in it as participants, and five as observers. The experiment was conducted at the Preparatory School of Canik Basari University (Turkey) totally for 16 weeks in the education year 2012/2013.

The experiment was held in two stages:

- First, with pre-intermediate level of students' skills (8 weeks)
- Second, with upper intermediate level of students' skills (8 weeks)

Video-recording was used in both experimental groups to detect the students' problems as well as my (as a teacher) weaknesses concerning behavior, teaching methods and speaking, and to follow the later developments of these in further recordings.

The methodological triangulation was used during the data collection phase of the research. The research data consists of teacher observation, student observation, teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, students' oral quiz results statistics and the video observation comments of the relevant teachers.

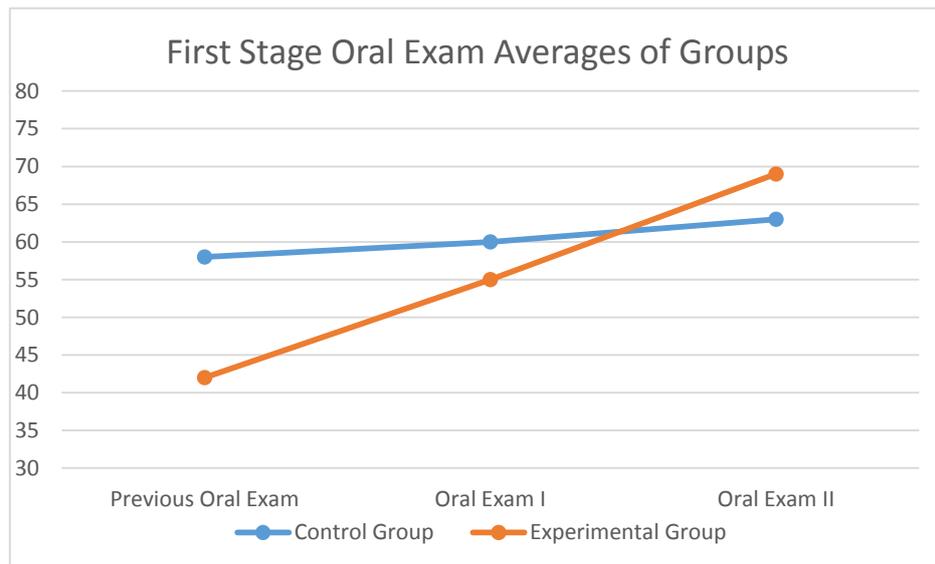
The results of teacher and student questionnaire are too voluminous to be shown in the abstract, so find below just as a sample answers to one question in the questionnaire and some results of student oral assessment presented in a chart, which show that students of the experimental groups really benefitted from teacher's reflective teaching done via video recording of speaking classes.

Table 1: Student Questionnaire Concerning Video Recording: item 3: "I can see that I do not have difficulty in answering the question"

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Before experiment	21	2.33	0.795	-5.656	.000
After experiment	21	3.95	0.864		

Students had to assess in Likert scale (1→5) how much they agree with the statement. The results suggest an increase related with the question. Before experiment is (M= 2.3, SD= 0.79), and after experiment is (M= 3.9, SD= 0.86), and the conditions are (t value = -8.05, and p value = 0.00). The results are quite significant and measure the expected outcome which indirectly refers to the improvement of speaking skills. The results are quite inspiring, as the mean increased by 1.62.

Chart 1: First Stage Oral Exam Averages



The chart shows that the experimental group was initially weaker than the control group, but finally the experimental group displayed a faster progress in speaking skills and achieved a greater success.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study can be listed as follows:

- 1- The Turkish teachers of English in the experiment and English teachers in general can improve their teaching English speaking skills if they do self-assessment. It is necessary

to do self-assessment time to time in order to eliminate the teacher-caused student weaknesses.

- 2- Video recording provides a critical reflection tool for ELT teachers of speaking who want to perform individual assessments with or without a partial change in the syllabus.
- 3- The teaching methods and the attitudes of the English teachers can positively effect and alter the language acquisition in EFL speaking classes, and self-reflection via video recording will positively contribute to this.
- 4- The English language learners will benefit from video recording method indirectly with the improved teaching practices of their teachers. They will also benefit directly by being recorded and by assessing themselves.
- 5- The Turkish students in the experiment and the learners in general can improve their speaking skills with the efforts of the teacher. However, their own desire and efforts are required, too, for a better progress.

The findings and the evaluations of the data gathered in the study confirm the hypothesis of the study. Taking into consideration the limitations of the study, further study is required to get larger scale results. However, the research permits me to judge that video recording can be a common self-assessment tool in the future for all ELT teachers who want to achieve self-assessment and self-progress.

Practical Implications

First of all, teachers need to feel that they should possess the idea of reflection, self-assessment and the need for self-observation and evaluation. Besides, they should know that reflection is an indispensable tool for them.

Currently, the Turkish teachers and the ELT teachers in general can and should use video recording not only to present materials and hold activities, but also as a self-reflection tool in order to improve their practices.

However student-centered contemporary education may be, we as the educators should be more self-critical, self-observant and reflective. I believe video recording will be very practical for self-assessment and reflection. It is known that, being very busy, teachers often refrain from additional time-consuming activities; however, video recording, as a less time-consuming way to self-reflect will enable them to see oneself like in a mirror in a critical way with little time spent whenever they are free. Video recording also eliminates the embarrassment

of teachers from peers, or observants, and provides self-assurance more than live observation during class time.

The publications which display the related topics from the thesis can be listed like that:

- 1- Betul Ayse Sayin. (2012). Reflective Teaching: From Benefits for Second Language Classes to an Effective Teacher. *Alatoo Academic Studies*. Kirghizistan. 7 (2). p. 106-110
- 2- Betul Ayse Sayin. (2013). Using Video-recording Method in Listening and Speaking Classes. *Conference Proceedings from "The 3rd Black Sea ELT Conference"*. Samsun, Turkey. p.18-25
- 3- Betul Ayse Sayin. (2013). Promoting Teacher Self-assessment Through Video-recording (with a questionnaire study on Turkish university teachers). *IBSU Journal of Education*. Tbilisi, Georgia. 2 (1). p. 41-45