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A Korean Elementary School EFL Teacher's Implementation of Teacher-Based Assessment

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This study examines a Korean elementary school EFL teacher's practice of teacher-based assessment (TBA), a subject which has been little researched despite the authorities' strong call for its implementation. The classroom interactions for TBA were observed and audio-recorded in eight fifth-grade classes between March and June 2010. Additionally, the teacher and students were interviewed in a semi-structured way. The results showed that the teacher used three types of TBA: assessment of individual students on different topics, assessment of the entire class on the same topic, and assessment of individual students on the same topic. Due mainly to time constraints during class time and classroom management issues, the teacher preferred implementing the first two types of TBA. During the practice of the types, the teacher provided prompts or posed questions in ways that elicited responses which were short in length and easy. Although the third type of TBA was perceived by both the teacher and students as helping students enhance their EFL proficiency and was the most favored by the students, it was viewed by the teacher as having the potential of causing classroom management difficulties. Based on the findings, a number of implications are suggested.

[teacher-based assessment (TBA)/EFL classroom/classroom interactions/EFL teacher]

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the close relationship between assessment and teaching/learning has been highlighted again in the area of second language teaching (Poehner, 2009). The resurgent interest has been visible particularly in the efforts of the education authorities around the world to press for the implementation of teacher-based assessment (TBA) (Davison &

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Leung, 2009). According to Leung (2005), TBA refers to "non-standardized local assessment carried out by teachers in their classroom" (p. 871). While TBA is seen by some as more suitable for assessing language than externally administered examinations because of its strength in terms of authenticity and focus on performance (e.g., Davison & Leung, 2009), there have been conflicting views about its validity, reliability, practicality, cost, and fairness. Some researchers have expressed reservations about the strengths of TBA (e.g., Gattullo, 2000; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000), yet others have maintained the view that it is valid and reliable (e.g., Davison & Leung, 2009). The differing views have led to a number of studies looking at TBA from various perspectives.

Despite the wealth of research, however, very few attempts have been made to investigate the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher's practice of TBA. In one of the few studies undertaken, Butler (2009) examined Korean elementary and secondary school EFL teachers' assessments of video-recorded performances of elementary students. Although the study reports interesting findings involving the existence of variability in teacher assessment depending on school level, it does not provide the rich and contextualized description of the EFL teacher's real-time engagement in TBA that could yield results which are transferable (Lazaraton, 1995) to other classroom contexts. Without taking into account the results from a close look at how TBA is performed by the EFL teacher-assessor in interactions with her/his students (Poehner, 2009), it seems unlikely that any attempts to address the issue of TBA in the EFL classroom could produce satisfactory answers. It is hoped that the current study, which seeks to fill this empirical gap by answering the following research question, will present findings that adequately describe and explain a Korean EFL teacher's practice of TBA as well as suggest insightful implications.

The research question for the current study was: How does a Korean elementary school EFL teacher implement TBA in the classroom?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, TBA has been strongly encouraged in the educational language policies of many countries (Butler, 2009). The Korean 7th National Curriculum for English Education of 1999, which was predicated upon communicative approaches (Jung, 2006), prescribed that TBA be implemented using a variety of methods, including ongoing observation. The curricular prescription, though, has been followed more sincerely in the elementary school setting than in the secondary school setting. The main reason for this difference has been attributed to the impact of large-scale assessments (Butler, 2009), such as the College Scholastic Ability Test, on English teaching in secondary school classrooms.

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In addition, the formative and context-sensitive nature of TBA (McNamara, 2001; Teasdale & Leung, 2000) seems to contribute to its wider practice in elementary school classrooms. First, the context-sensitive nature of TBA could enable elementary school teachers to focus on the specificity of their own teaching settings and provide customized feedback to their students, while giving a strong support to the development of their future proficiency (Poehner, 2009). Second, the formative nature of TBA could benefit elementary school students more than secondary school students because, in the case of beginning level EFL learners, it could greatly improve English learning with feedback from teachers and allow teachers to better implement their teaching (Xu & Liu, 2009).

In particular, the formative nature of TBA needs to be considered from the perspective of assessment for learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Assessment for learning was conceptualized about two decades ago in the UK as a paradigm emphasizing the need to enable assessments to perform more than their traditional functions of grading and reporting (Assessment Reform Group, 1999, cited in Davison & Leung, 2009). The function which assessment for learning has aimed at performing has been to improve student learning (Biggs, 1998; Davison & Hamp-Lyons, 2009; Harlen, 2005). In formulating the framework of teaching/learning which facilitates student learning, the development and implementation of TBA has been argued to be indispensable (Davison & Leung, 2009).

Notwithstanding the importance of TBA, Korean EFL teachers have been provided few training opportunities for learning how to carry out TBA (Butler, 2009). The lack of relevant teacher training programs results in part from the paucity of prior research. Out of the limited number of previous studies, only two appear to present findings that adequately show language teachers' engagement in TBA. The first study, undertaken by Butler (2009), looked at the practice of TBA by Korean EFL teachers at elementary and secondary school levels. The participating teachers observed and assessed the video-recorded performances of group activities in English by elementary school sixth graders. What was interestingly found in the study was that there existed much variability between elementary and secondary school teachers' assessments. Butler contended that the variability derived from the difference in teaching context between the two school levels. Although the study reports in detail where the TBA of Korean EFL teachers across school levels differ, it has limitations in its ability to illustrate how a teacher actually engages in TBA in her/his own classroom. The study does not adequately demonstrate or account for a Korean EFL teacher's practice of TBA while involved in classroom interactions.

Poehner (2009) cited and analyzed two qualitative case studies of language teachers' implementation of TBA through classroom interactions using the framework of group

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dynamic assessment (G-DA). According to Poehner, the objective of G-DA is to develop the second language (L2) abilities of individual learners by offering them mediation through assessment. He proposes two types of G-DA; concurrent G-DA and cumulative G-DA. Concurrent G-DA refers to TBA implemented through engaging in interactions with the whole class while cumulative G-DA refers to TBA implemented through engaging in continuous one-on-one interactions with individual learners. Poehner presented a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) and sufficient explanations of how the two types of G-DA took place and how they were influenced by real-time contextual classroom constraints. Despite its merits, however, the study looked only at the cases of English language learners in Australia and L2 Spanish learners in the US.

Given that the implementation of TBA by EFL classroom practitioners constitutes an important research agenda which should be addressed urgently (Xu & Liu, 2009), it seems imperative that a study be undertaken to investigate a Korean EFL teacher's practice of TBA in her/his classroom. In order to identify the underlying factors for the teacher's implementation of TBA, it would be necessary to examine her/his related beliefs as a teacher's beliefs have been claimed to largely determine her/his classroom behavior (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001; Gatbonton, 1999). In particular, it would be interesting for the new study to look at how three components of teacher beliefs, i.e., training, target language (TL) learning experiences, and contextual factors, affect a Korean elementary school EFL teacher's practice of TBA.

Recently, discussions on methodological approaches to elementary school English teaching have been actively pursued in a number of EFL countries (Kang, 2008). In parallel, the education authorities in countries including Korea have decided to begin teaching English in the elementary school (Butler, 2007; Park, 2004). Notwithstanding the amount of attention accorded to EFL pedagogy for elementary school students, however, teachers can hardly be expected to be enthusiastic about the implementation of TBA because they have a tendency to perceive it as an addition to their already heavy workload (Heritage, 2007). Additionally, the present lack of availability of resources for the implementation of TBA, including the criteria according to which teachers could assign points on their observation rating scales, has the potential of increasing inconsistency within and between teacher-assessors (Butler, 2009). The impact of the inhibiting factors would be best dealt with by first analyzing teachers' classroom implementation of TBA.

The current study, a case study conducted to help fill the gaps discussed above, is expected to propose directions for the implementation of TBA in a pedagogically beneficial way, based on findings that could be cautiously interpreted as a diagnosis of how Korean elementary school EFL teachers implement TBA in their classrooms.

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III. METHODS

1. Participants

The participant in the current study was a non-native English speaking EFL teacher from an elementary school located in Seoul, Korea. The neighborhood in which the school was located was in general regarded as either not-so-rich or not-so-poor. The teacher, in her mid-thirties and with eleven years of teaching experience, had taught English for six years. She self-evaluated her EFL proficiency level as intermediate, and reported that she earned a middle range score of 600 on the TOEIC test (Educational Testing Service, 2011). She had earned a master's degree in TEFL and was found during the post-observation interview to be appreciative of the importance of implementing TBA in the classroom.

2. Procedure

Prior to undertaking the current study at the beginning of March 2010, the researcher contacted two Korean EFL teacher study groups to ask them to provide him with candidates for the study. At first, all of the candidates expressed an unwillingness to take part in the study for various reasons. One of them eventually agreed to participate, following the researcher's repeated persuasion that her participation would help contribute to the development of EFL classroom pedagogy for her students. The teacher obtained the consent of her school principal and the parents of her students. Initially, the researcher informed the teacher only about the general purpose of the study.

The fieldwork occurred once every two weeks for a total of eight times between March and June 2010. The researcher conducted non-participant observations of a fifth-grade classroom. There were a total of 30 students who learned English twice a week in 40 minute periods. According to the teacher under study, the parents showed a great deal of interest in their children's English learning, and most of the students took part in private tutoring in English. The teacher used mainly the text book published by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) and employed both English and Korean in the classroom.

As a means of recording the classroom interactions, only audio-recording and note-taking were used due to the teacher's strenuous objection to the employment of other recording devices. The researcher asked the teacher to try to ignore the presence of the audio recording device and him, with a view to decreasing any unwanted effects resulting from her awareness of being observed and audio-recorded.

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In addition, the researcher carried out two interviews with the teacher in Korean: prior to the first observation and at the end of the eighth observation. The semi-structured interviews, expected to afford the participating teacher power and control as well as flexibility (Nunan, 1992), lasted approximately an hour and a half, respectively. The pre-observation interview was focused on gaining some understanding of the teacher's personal background and building a mutual rapport. The post-observation interview was intended as an opportunity for the researcher to conclusively confirm, from the perspective of the teacher's belief systems, what had been observed and analyzed with regard to the practice of TBA. The students were also interviewed in Korean for 15 minutes each. The semi-structured interviews with the students, conducted one day after the eighth observation, were used to complement the researcher's analysis. The interviews with the teacher and students were audio-recorded. The researcher exercised considerable caution to ensure that all the interviews would be carried out in a non-manipulative way for stronger investigatory validity. The audio-recorded classroom interactions and interviews were transcribed verbatim and, when the transcriptions were in Korean, translated into English for reporting.

3. Data Analysis

Analysis of the data from the transcribed audio-recordings, interviews, and field notes was performed in the following sequence. First, the researcher went over and analyzed the transcription of audio-recordings and field note entries. He identified certain patterns in the teacher's practice of TBA and categorized (Miles & Huberman, 1994) them into three types: assessment of individual students on different topics, assessment of the entire class on the same topic, and assessment of individual students on the same topic. Second, the researcher tentatively identified some critical traits of the types based on the scrutinized data. The traits were then reviewed by two EFL teachers with masters' degrees in TEFL, one of whom worked in the teacher’s school. Third, the researcher analyzed the interviews with the teacher and students to determine whether there existed any agreement between their ideas and beliefs about each type of TBA in classroom interactions and his preliminary interpretations. Further, the interviews were examined to refine the researcher's interpretations. Interestingly, it was found that the responses to some interview items were substantially similar across students and the responses to some items were practically identical. As a result, it was decided that the representative responses would be used together with other data in reporting the findings of the study.

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IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Assessment of Individual Students on Different Topics

One of the two most frequent types of TBA, which was employed a total of three times in the eight observed classes, was found to be assessment of individual students on different topics. The teacher was observed posing questions or providing prompts to individual students for various purposes, among which checking student learning of the content being taught was the most noticeable. What was noteworthy was that the teacher almost always posed questions or provided prompts in a way that elicited responses that were short, simple, and easy when implementing this type of TBA. The following is a relevant exchange that took place toward the end of the wrap-up activity.

(1) Classroom Interactions Featuring Assessment of Individual Students on Different Topics

T: As we have just reviewed, today we have learned how to express the locations of things we are, or someone else is, looking for. Was it interesting?

Ss: (in unison) Yes, ma'am.

T: Good (a bit irritated with the continuous noise from students). Stop chattering. My head is aching!

Ss: (falling silent)

T: I hope you will review at home what you have learned today. You (calling one student by name) remember that I emphasized in today's lesson several expressions you can use to warn someone to be careful, don't you? I want you to give me the shorter one among them. A very short and simple one. It consists of only two words. Can you tell me what it is?

S1: (Standing up) Yes, ma'am. It's 'Watch out!'.

T: Excellent! Nice job! Can you (calling another student by name) tell me an expression you can use when someone says ‘sorry’ to you? The expression that shows you don’t mind her or his mistake and things like that? It’s a very short and simple expression. Give me the answer that’s shorter and easier than others.

S2: (Standing up) Yes, ma’am. It’s ‘It’s okay’.

T: Terrific! Right on target!

As is clear from (1), the teacher repeatedly stressed her intention to assess individual students’ knowledge of expressions that were shorter in length, simpler, and thus easier than the other expressions having the same or similar meaning. Regarding the feature of this type of TBA, the teacher made it clear that the reason for limiting her students' choice

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to shorter responses was to increase the young students' motivation (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003). She also maintained that her positive feedback to their responses could contribute to the reduction of the potentially negative effects of test results on them (Koh, et al., 2005). In addition to TL learning and teaching experiences, her motive was found to be influenced by time constraints belonging to contextual factors (Shim, 2009) as illustrated below.

(2) Teacher's Report:

What affected my focus on assessing students' knowledge of shorter length and simpler expressions was, first of all, my EFL learning and teaching experiences. I still vividly remember how elated I was when I received encouragement from my teacher after giving him the correct answer which was a two-word expression. It was in my first year at middle school, and I had never been exposed to English before. My students have also told me their motivation and confidence have been enhanced with the encouragement given to them for the provision of the correct short responses. I believe my encouraging feedback helps decrease the harmful impact of some test results on my students, just as my teachers' encouragement did. A more important factor responsible for my choice of the assessment type, though, was time constraints. It is very difficult to allocate much time for assessment purposes in the classroom. All the activities involved in each class period - chanting, group activities, explanations of important points – do not normally allow me enough time to wait for students to ponder over answers that are long in length and complicated. Besides, as you know, elementary school English textbooks in Korea mostly contain simple and short expressions. Yes, a teacher training program in which I took part stressed the importance of using several assessment methods in the classroom, but that's easier said than done; and, although I also support the idea that I could benefit my students by asking them questions requiring answers that are longer in length and more challenging, I simply don't have the time and opportunity to do it.

From (2), it seems clear that teacher training programs had little effect on the teacher's beliefs (Kagan, 1992) about TBA, unlike TL learning/teaching experience and contextual factors. In particular, the weaker impact of teacher training reflects the need for the organizers of training programs to take into consideration the practical limitations experienced by teachers attempting to implement various time-consuming forms of TBA.

While most students agreed that their confidence increased through participating in this type of TBA, some of them disapproved of the teacher's approach. The five students, whom the teacher evaluated as high-achieving, stated that her emphasis on shorter length and easier responses made them less motivated to strive to learn what they perceived to be

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more difficult. Further, they reported that they experienced feelings of not only complacency, but of alienation due to her strong focus on the lower proficiency learners. Concerning their disapproval of her approach, the teacher explained that she had no alternative but to place her focus on the intermediate achievers who constituted the largest percentage of students in her large-size, mixed ability class (Carless, 2004). Given that contextual constraints considerably affect EFL teacher beliefs and behavior (Borg, 2009), it appears necessary that the education authorities complement after-school EFL class programs by creating classes in each of which a small number of high achievers take part in TBA and are encouraged to give answers that are longer and more complex (Kim, 2009; Koh, 2006).

Another aspect to consider with regard to the teacher's focus on eliciting from students shorter and easier responses in the practice of TBA directed at individual students is that it had the danger of preventing her from adequately co-constructing the zone of proximal development (ZPD) with students (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). According to Vygotsky (1998, cited in Poehner, 2009), the ZPD refers to the time optimal for teaching a group as well as each individual student. The relevance of the ZPD for TBA, underlined by the close interrelationship between assessment and teaching (Davison & Leung, 2009), seems to require teachers to involve an individual student in a larger number of interactions while implementing TBA. The process of interactions in which an individual student is led to participate would enable her/him to co-construct the ZPD and further develop language abilities (Poehner, 2009). The exchange given above in (1) appears to show that the interactions in which the teacher and the student took part were not conducive to helping them co-construct the ZPD. Taking it into account that elementary school EFL classes are where students are exposed to English for the first time in the school setting (Nunan, 2003), the role TBA could play in laying the foundation for enabling students to develop their EFL proficiency should be more highlighted. In the case of teachers whose preferences in the practice of this type of TBA are similar or identical to that of the teacher under study, it seems that they should take a balanced look at the relative merits of increased student confidence and active co-construction of the ZPD in order to improve their students' EFL abilities.

2. Assessment of the Entire Class on the Same Topic

The type of assessment of the entire class on the same topic, which occurred a total of four times in the eight observed classes, was the most frequent type of TBA used by the teacher under analysis. The motive for this type was revealed to be much influenced by time constraints during class time and a large administrative workload, both contextual factors. In particular, the time and efforts she needed to expend conducting administrative

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work left her insufficient room for making pedagogical efforts (Avalos, 1998) including planning and implementing TBA. As a result, she posed questions or provided prompts to the entire class in a way that elicited short and easy responses, the same as in the type of assessment of individual students on different topics. Below is how the teacher undertook TBA directed at the entire class.

(3) Classroom Interactions Featuring Assessment of the Entire Class on the Same Topic

T: You are learning very useful expressions today. Very useful expressions.
Ss: (making loud noises while talking to one another)
T: (a bit irritated with the noises) What's going on in here! If you keep on chattering, you will not learn some very important expressions. Expressions that can help you in many ways. Got it?
Ss: (still chattering among themselves) Yes, ma'am.
T: (containing her anger) Now, tell me the expression you use when you ask your conversation partner to say again what she/he has just said. You know, when you didn't catch what she/he has just said. And it's short, simple, and easy. Sometimes, I want you to use the Korean equivalent of this expression less often. I taught it today.
Ss: (while making noises) 'I'm sorry?'
T: (in an irritated tone) Very good; but, please, please stop chattering. I can't stand it. (angrily pointing to two students who were moving around at the back of the classroom) You two, go back to your desks!

In (3), the teacher seems to be exasperated by noisily chattering students who keep her from concentrating on her practice of TBA toward the end of the textbook reading activity. The students were observed afterwards talking to one another continuously until the end of the class. The teacher's difficulties with classroom management (Doyle, 1986; Tauber, 1999), also belonging to contextual factors, clearly had a negative impact on the implementation of TBA in her EFL classroom. Despite the seriousness of the issue of classroom management in the practice of TBA, little attention has been paid to it. This lack of interest, which has also been shown toward other areas of classroom EFL pedagogy (Sakui, 2007), should be addressed in earnest in order for EFL teachers to experience fewer obstacles to the practice of TBA. The teacher under study reported that classroom management had been posing increasing threats to her practice and planning of TBA, as follows.

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(4) Teacher's Report:

Kids these days are really, really unruly. You see, when I was an elementary school student, my class had a lot more kids; however, my teacher had far less trouble with classroom management. We were a lot more respectful of teachers. These days, kids simply disobey the teacher's orders. Fewer students, more problems! Ironic, but true. As you know, communicative language teaching requires you to talk a lot more and let the kids talk often. The problem is that kids see the communicative activities as an opportunity to disrupt the learning atmosphere of the classroom. I'd love to scold the fire out of them, but I can't. They or their parents will immediately report me to the police! Because of this, I can rarely plan ahead the implementation of assessment. And during class, I usually find my moment-to-moment evaluation of the classroom atmosphere leading me to choose an assessment which is targeted for the entire class and asks them questions on their knowledge of short and simple expressions/words; you know, the expressions/words I have taught during class. For this type of assessment, I support the idea that you could contribute to student learning by asking them questions that require them to give you answers long in length and more difficult, more than I do for an assessment directed at an individual student for answers short in length and simple. The difficulties with classroom management also keep me from engaging in a series of interactions. To be sure, the type has its own strength. Lower proficiency students are more likely to learn from the answers provided by higher proficiency students during the entire class response than during the other types of assessment; you know, where they imitate or copy higher proficiency students' responses given in unison and a chant-like way. They give me the correct answers when I ask them some of the same questions two or three weeks later. One thing that's certain is that this type of TBA will most likely remain my favorite unless drastic changes take place.

As is evident in (4), the teacher had ambivalence towards this type of TBA. On the one hand, she suspected that the TBA type could not help her develop her students' EFL abilities to a large extent. On the other hand, she valued the possible pedagogical benefit the TBA type had on lower level EFL learners. Such views on the TBA type interestingly contrast with those on the type of assessment of individual students on different topics. The teacher stated that the former type consumed less class time and thus put less of a burden on her class. While the two types of TBA shared the feature of eliciting from students shorter length and easier responses and prevented the adequate co-construction of the ZPD by the teacher and her students from occurring, the perceived difference between them made her more sensitive to student behavior that was damaging to her classroom management (Tauber, 2007) before and during the practice of this type of TBA. In this

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respect, it seems imperative that the education authorities begin to take serious steps to allow EFL teachers to worry less about classroom management so that they might implement TBA in pedagogically more effective ways. Students' perspectives on the teacher's practice of this type of TBA were similar to those on the type of assessment of individual students on different topics.

3. Assessment of Individual Students on the Same Topic

This type of TBA, unlike the types discussed above, was implemented through a larger number of interactions. While its implementation was less frequent than that of the other types, only once in the eight observed classes, it is noteworthy that the students were stimulated to more actively and enthusiastically participate in interactions involved in the practice of this type of TBA. The following are the relevant interactions that occurred toward the end of the wrap-up activity.

(5) Classroom Interactions Featuring Assessment of Individual Students on the Same Topic

T: Wow! As we have just reviewed, we have learned how to give people directions to their destinations. (calling a student by name) Stand up and tell me an expression you can use when the place someone is looking for is here (pointing to a building on the fictitious map on the board with the word 'bank' written below it).

S1: 'Go straight and it's right there.'

T: Well, I don't think that’s good enough. (pointing to another student) Why don't you tell me the expression?

S2: 'Go straight this way and turn left.'

T: You're close, very close. And you have a building nearby. Can you add several words to the expression?

S2: 'Go straight this way and turn left at the post office.'

T: Great. It might be better, though, for you to put another sentence at the end of the expression.

S3: (raising her hand) 'Go straight this way and turn left at the post office. You can't miss it.'

T: Terrific! And you know what? You guys have not been noisy! I hope you will be this way till the end of the class.

The teacher's engagement in interactions with individual students for TBA in (5) seems to be similar to that in what Poehner (2009) termed concurrent G-DA. Poehner claimed that concurrent G-DA occurs between a teacher and an individual student (primary

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interactant), and then between the teacher and another individual student (secondary interactant) the moment the primary interactant fails to give an adequate answer. Through concurrent G-DA, he argued, individual language learners' abilities could be developed within their ZPDs. Consistent with Poehner's argument, students in the current study overall reported that this type of TBA contributed to the improvement in their learning outcomes by increasing their interest in what they learned during class (Fareh, 2010). With respect to the students' view of this type of TBA, it seems interesting that in (5) the teacher has little difficulty with classroom management. Most students stated that they had stopped chattering or moving around because this TBA type had aroused and sustained their interest to a greater degree. They expressed their strong approval of this type, also because they perceived that a rapport between the teacher and them was being built while they were engaging in interactions for the TBA type. Below is what one of the students stated.

(6) Student's Report

I find it very exciting when we and the teacher engage in a conversation in which the teacher asks us the same question until we give her the right answer. You know, first the teacher asks one of us the question and if she does not get the correct answer, she asks another one of us the same question. And if the teacher is not satisfied with the answer from that kid, then she asks another one. My classmates have also said that they like this kind of conversation. This is why we concentrate on what the teacher says during the conversation. We don’t find ourselves bored. Rather, we find it fun to learn what the teacher tells us. I also like the feeling of closeness that I get toward the teacher during the conversation. And the best thing is, I don't feel very anxious during the conversation because of the feeling of friendliness I have for the teacher.

The formation of rapport in the course of TBA in elementary school EFL classrooms, which has been little studied, appears to merit considerable attention both theoretically and practically. Specifically, given the importance of efforts to minimize the test anxiety of elementary school EFL learners (Chan & Wu, 2004) in order to help them improve their EFL proficiency, more research on rapport-building during TBA needs to be carried out.

While acknowledging its positive effects on students' EFL learning, the teacher expressed reservations about this type of TBA due to its potential harmfulness to classroom management. She suspected that feelings of rapport could degenerate into threats to her authority as a teacher. The resultant disruption of classroom management represented a reversion to the two types of TBA discussed above. She decided on the implementation of this type of TBA mostly on a moment-by-moment basis. Below is what the teacher reported concerning this TBA type.

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(7) Teacher's Report:
As I told you earlier, my class is usually jam-packed with activities to do. I can't find much time to undertake assessment during class; but, occasionally, I do find the time to engage students in a series of interactions for assessment. And if then I happen to have very important points to emphasize through the implementation of assessment, I weigh how much energy and time I need to spend on classroom management. If I perceive the atmosphere of the class as suitable, I proceed to implement the type of assessment we are talking about. And yes, I acknowledge the benefits that this assessment type could provide to my students. What I'm trying to tell you is that classroom management determines whether I can help my students learn English better through the implementation of this type of assessment.

What is noteworthy about (7) is that the teacher took a careful approach to making decisions relating to TBA. She was deeply aware of the need to evaluate contextual variables in her EFL classroom (Peng & Woodrow, 2010) before deciding on the implementation of this type of TBA. Interestingly, her attention to classroom management was found to be strengthened by her experience as an EFL teacher. The interrelationship between the two components of her pedagogical belief, i.e., contextual factors and TL teaching experience (Borg, 1997), appears to reflect the complexity involved in the formation of her teacher belief about this type of TBA. Considering that both the teacher and students viewed this TBA type as pedagogically beneficial, more focus could be profitably placed on teacher beliefs associated with the practice of TBA. Without conducting further, larger-scale studies examining relevant teacher beliefs and applying findings and implications from them, it seems that TBA could not be implemented in ways that adequately aid elementary school students' EFL learning.

V. CONCLUSION

The current study was carried out to investigate how a Korean elementary school EFL teacher implemented TBA in her classroom. The researcher conducted non-participant observations of a fifth-grade classroom once every two weeks for a total of eight times between March and June 2010. He audio-recorded and took notes of classroom interactions among a non-native English speaking teacher and her students. In order mainly to complement his interpretations of the classroom interactions for TBA, the researcher also interviewed the teacher and students in a semi-structured way twice and once, respectively.

The results showed that the teacher used three types of TBA: assessment of individual students on different topics, assessment of the entire class on the same topic, and

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assessment of individual students on the same topic. First, when the teacher implemented the type of assessment of individual students on different topics, she provided prompts or posed questions to individual student in ways that elicited shorter length, simpler, and easier answers. The motive for the type of TBA was found to be affected by her TL learning and teaching experiences and contextual factors, two components of her teacher belief. In particular, time constraints during class time belonging to contextual factors were revealed to be more influential. Second, the type of assessment of the entire class on the same topic was the most frequently implemented type. When implementing this type of TBA, the teacher gave prompts or asked questions to students in a way that encouraged them to present answers that were short in length and easy, as was the case with the type of assessment of individual students on different topics. The motive for this type was found to be determined by time constraints during class time and a heavy administrative workload, both of which belong to contextual factors. What was noteworthy was that the teacher's difficulty with classroom management caused her to have no alternative but to use this type of TBA most often. In contrast to these two types, the type of assessment of individual students on the same topic was implemented through a larger number of interactions. This type of TBA was revealed to be the least frequently implemented type. Interestingly, the teacher had less difficulty with classroom management, although students participated in interactions for this type of TBA more actively and enthusiastically. Both the teacher and students viewed this TBA type as helping students develop their EFL proficiency. The teacher expressed reservations about this type due to its possible damage to classroom management, though, despite the students' strong support of it because of its perceived role in building a rapport between them and her.

In terms of implications, the current study could make two suggestions. First, the education authorities should formulate various steps to help EFL teachers implement TBA without being constantly concerned about classroom management. As reported by the teacher under study, the issue of classroom management has recently placed a substantial burden on Korean teachers in many areas, including the practice of TBA. Although the authorities' steps would encounter considerable opposition from students and their parents, they should take them in a sustained way because proper classroom management leads to an environment where the effective implementation of TBA as well as teaching and learning can take place (Cruickshank, Bainer, & Metcalf, 1995). Second, teachers should be provided the opportunity to raise their awareness of the importance of the practice of TBA. Efforts made by teachers to better implement TBA would complement those made by the authorities to help teachers enhance their practice of TBA.

The current study is admittedly open to criticism in many respects, including the brevity of the period of observation and the non-use of the video recording device. Notwithstanding the limitations, however, two suggestions are to be made for future

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research. First, a large-scale survey of Korean elementary school EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the practice of TBA would contribute to an improved understanding of how practitioners view the classroom practice of TBA. Second, longitudinal observations of the practice of TBA by EFL teachers at different school levels and with different teaching experiences would complement findings from the large-scale survey mentioned above.

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