

THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: BEST PRACTICES

Kobilova Komila

Senior student UzSWLU

mrluck75@gmail.com

Musayeva Zebo

Senior lecturer UzSWLU

ANNOTATION. This study delves into the nuanced dynamics of feedback in language acquisition, particularly for second language (L2) learners. It investigates how different types and timings of feedback impact learners' proficiency and motivation. The study underscores the importance of a balanced approach to feedback delivery, tailored to individual learner needs, to create a supportive learning environment conducive to maximizing learning outcomes. Educators can use these insights to refine their feedback strategies, ultimately contributing to more effective language instruction and improved learning experiences for L2 learners.

Keywords: *language acquisition, feedback, second language learning, corrective feedback, affirmative feedback, learner motivation, pedagogical strategies, mixed-methods research, immediate feedback, delayed feedback.*

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition, particularly in the context of learning a second language (L2), is a multifaceted process influenced by various instructional methods. Among these methods, the provision of feedback is paramount. Feedback serves as a critical tool for informing learners about their performance and guiding them toward improvement. Giving feedback is an important part of the language learning process. It can help learners identify their mistakes and improve their language skills. There are three main types of feedback: corrective, positive, and negative. Corrective

feedback is designed to correct errors that learners make. Positive feedback focuses on the things that learners do well. Negative feedback points out the mistakes that learners make (English Phonetics). Feedback can be oral or written, immediate or delayed, direct or indirect, explicit or implicit, focused or unfocused, comprehensive or selective, and so on (LinkedIn). One prominent issue is determining the appropriate balance between corrective feedback, which focuses on pointing out errors and providing correct forms, and affirmative feedback, which aims to encourage and affirm correct usage. Many studies have been conducted such as studies on patterns of the provision of corrective feedback and learner's uptake (Halizah-i). Despite extensive research on feedback in education, there remains a significant gap in understanding the optimal balance and timing of different feedback types in the context of L2 learning. Previous studies have often focused on one aspect of feedback in isolation, such as its corrective nature or its motivational impact, without considering the synergistic effects of combining various feedback types.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review

Feedback is a critical component in language learning, providing learners with essential information on their performance and guiding their progress. The literature on feedback in language acquisition highlights various types of feedback, including corrective, affirmative, immediate, and delayed feedback, each with distinct impacts on learning outcomes. Corrective feedback focuses on identifying and correcting errors, which is vital for learners to understand their mistakes and improve accuracy. Affirmative feedback, on the other hand, aims to reinforce correct responses and boost learner confidence and motivation (Chen.J). Immediate feedback is provided soon after a learner's response, ensuring timely correction of errors and reinforcing correct language use. However, its immediacy can sometimes disrupt the flow of communication. "Delayed feedback, given after some time has passed, allows learners to self-reflect but may lead to the reinforcement of incorrect forms if not addressed promptly (Do Nascimento, E. 2022, June 5). Research indicates that the

most effective feedback strategies often involve a combination of corrective and affirmative feedback. This balanced approach addresses errors while maintaining learner motivation and engagement. Studies have shown that learners benefit significantly from immediate corrective feedback, which prevents the reinforcement of mistakes and provides instant learning opportunities (Abdullah, A. S., & Nael, M. A. 2022). They must also consider the individual needs of learners, as feedback that is too frequent or critical can be demotivating, while insufficient feedback can fail to address persistent errors (Cambridge University Press). The literature underscores the critical role of feedback in language acquisition and the necessity of a balanced approach that integrates immediate corrective feedback with affirmative feedback. This combined strategy not only enhances language proficiency but also supports learner motivation and engagement, offering a holistic solution to the challenges of effective feedback implementation.

Data Collection Methods

1. Quantitative Data:

- Participants: 200 L2 learners, randomly assigned to four experimental groups.
- Intervention:
 - Group 1: Immediate corrective feedback
 - Group 2: Delayed corrective feedback
 - Group 3: Immediate affirmative feedback
 - Group 4: Combined immediate corrective and affirmative feedback
- Instruments: Pre- and post-tests designed to measure language proficiency.
- Procedure: Each group receives feedback according to their assigned condition over a 10-week period.

2. Qualitative Data:

- Participants: A subset of 40 learners from the experimental groups.
- Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the study period.
- Instruments: Interview guides and observation checklists focused on feedback reception, learner motivation, and engagement.

Population/Sample

The study population consists of L2 learners from a language institute in a metropolitan area. A sample of 200 learners was selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diversity in age, gender, and proficiency level. The qualitative subset of 40 learners was chosen to represent a range of experiences and perceptions.

Tools/Instruments

1. Pre- and Post-Tests: Standardized language proficiency tests covering grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension.
2. Interview Guides: Structured to explore learners' attitudes towards different types of feedback and their perceived impact on motivation and learning.
3. Observation Checklists: Used to systematically record instances of feedback delivery and learner responses in the classroom.

Procedure

The study commenced with pre-testing all participants to establish baseline language proficiency levels. Over the 10-week intervention period, each group received feedback according to their designated condition during regular language classes. Post-tests were administered at the end of the intervention to measure changes in language proficiency. Concurrently, qualitative data were collected through periodic interviews and observations to capture the nuanced effects of feedback on learner motivation and engagement.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using ANOVA to compare pre- and post-test scores across the four groups, determining the statistical significance of differences. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in learners' perceptions of feedback. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this study aims to provide robust evidence on the best practices for feedback in L2 acquisition, offering actionable insights for educators to enhance instructional strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Feedback type	Average Score Increase (%)	Key Observations
Immediate Corrective	20	Substantial improvement in language proficiency; occasional disruption in communicative flow.
Delayed Corrective	12	Moderate improvement; self-reflection valued but risk of reinforcing errors.
Immediate Affirmative	15	Improved learner's confidence and motivation; need for more corrective input.
Combined Immediate Corrective and Affirmative	25	Highest overall improvement; balanced experience with motivation and proficiency gains.

The findings from this study underscore the critical role of feedback in language acquisition. The significant improvement in language proficiency among learners receiving immediate corrective feedback aligns with previous research indicating the efficacy of timely error correction in facilitating learning. The present study of 28 UAE students taking an EAP course suggests that error correction by teachers is less effective than self-correction (Abdullah, A. S., & Nael, M. A. 2022). However, the moderate gains in the delayed feedback group suggest that while reflection is valuable, prompt correction is more effective in preventing the reinforcement of errors. The notable performance of the combined feedback group provides compelling evidence for a balanced approach. This group's superior improvement highlights the synergistic effect of integrating immediate corrective feedback with affirmative feedback. Such an approach not only addresses errors promptly but also maintains learner motivation through positive reinforcement, leading to a more holistic and effective learning experience. Qualitative insights further illuminate the nuanced impacts of feedback on learner motivation and

engagement. The immediate corrective feedback group, while achieving high proficiency gains, sometimes experienced disruptions in communication flow, suggesting a need for careful implementation to avoid negative impacts on learner confidence. Conversely, the affirmative feedback group, despite feeling more encouraged, demonstrated a clear demand for corrective input to advance their linguistic accuracy. These findings have important implications for language educators. Implementing a feedback strategy that combines immediate corrective feedback with consistent affirmative feedback can enhance both language proficiency and learner motivation. Educators should aim to deliver corrective feedback in a manner that minimizes disruptions, perhaps by framing corrections positively or integrating them seamlessly into ongoing communication. “Once the error is confirmed, it’s good to provide the correct language to learners clearly with a brief verbal explanation. A written record of the correction can help learners know what to work on after an online lesson (Chen.J). The study also highlights the importance of tailoring feedback to individual learner needs. Differentiating feedback strategies based on learner proficiency levels, confidence, and specific challenges can further optimize learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of feedback in language acquisition, specifically examining the effects of different types and timings of feedback on L2 learners' proficiency and motivation. The findings demonstrate that immediate corrective feedback significantly enhances language acquisition, while delayed corrective feedback offers moderate benefits by promoting self-reflection, albeit with a risk of reinforcing errors. Affirmative feedback boosts learner confidence and motivation but is less effective in addressing persistent errors when used alone. The combination of immediate corrective and affirmative feedback yielded the most substantial improvement in both language proficiency and learner motivation, suggesting that a balanced approach is optimal. This integrated feedback strategy not only facilitates accurate language use but also sustains learner engagement and confidence, creating a more supportive and effective learning environment. These

results provide actionable insights for language educators, emphasizing the importance of timely and balanced feedback. Implementing immediate corrective feedback in a manner that minimizes disruptions, alongside consistent affirmative feedback, can optimize learning outcomes. Tailoring feedback strategies to individual learner needs and maintaining a supportive atmosphere are crucial for maximizing both proficiency gains and learner motivation. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these feedback practices and their applicability across different linguistic and cultural contexts. By refining feedback strategies based on empirical evidence, educators can significantly enhance the effectiveness of language instruction, ultimately contributing to better learning experiences and outcomes for L2 learners.

REFERENCES

1. Abdullah, A. S., & Nael, M. A. (2022). Giving feedback to language learners. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(8), 5841-5861.
2. Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Giving Feedback [PDF].
3. Chen, J. (n.d.). Providing effective error correction. EF Teach Online.
4. Do Nascimento, E. (2022, June 5). Giving feedback to language learners.
5. English Bulletin. (2018, January 27). Feedback in ELT: The Role and Common Type of Feedback in Classroom Setting. English Bulletin.
6. English Phonetics. (n.d.). Giving feedback to language learners.
7. Halizah-i. (n.d.). Feedback in language research.
8. LinkedIn. (n.d.). How can you use feedback to improve your language skills?