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Undergraduate Learners' Feedback Preference in the EFL Classroom of Bangladesh

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Abstract: Feedback plays a vital role in developing students' adeptness in English language learning. Though there are diverse forms of feedback, this study emphasized the major feedback approaches. The objective of this article was to find out the most preferred form of feedback by the EFL students and to detect whether they prefer a combination of various feedback in the classroom. Moreover, the perception and preference for feedback also come to light through this study. The data for the study have been gathered from 45 undergraduate students of a private university located in Dhaka, Bangladesh, through a questionnaire survey and one-to-one interviews with 10 students. To ensure the authenticity of the results, both quantitative and qualitative data have been used for profound insights. The results of the study are meant to bring a deep insight into EFL students' preferences for teachers' feedback in the classroom of the selected university. However, the investigation's outcomes lack generalizability across Bangladesh's EFL context, as they do not reflect the actual classroom realities of the entire milieu.

Keywords: Feedback, undergraduate level, feedback preference, EFL classroom

Introduction

Making mistakes is a natural aspect of acquiring proficiency in the English language. When students make errors, teachers assume the role of correctors, providing necessary direction to help them produce the target form. Through feedback, teachers help students bridge the gap between their current and desired performance, thereby enhancing both learning and satisfaction. Brookhart (2008) asserts that feedback can be authoritative when executed correctly, and effective feedback equips students with the guidance necessary to understand their learning levels and subsequent actions. The effectiveness of feedback depends on various factors, including its shape and character. Learners' preferences for feedback may differ based on their perspective, cognitive style, gender, and many other factors. In the Bangladeshi EFL setting, there is no specific guideline for providing comments on students' performance. Teachers typically offer feedback based on their assessment. They may possess different perceptions from the students regarding feedback. Teachers' feedback may elicit feelings of comfort or discomfort in students. Hence, it is imperative to understand their preferences regarding teachers' input in the classroom. Brookhart (2008) contended that teachers must anticipate the appropriateness of providing immediate or delayed feedback, the degree and frequency of such input, the modality of feedback: oral or written, and the choice between conferencing or individual feedback. Such considerations are contingent upon the context and the educators involved, as well as individual preferences for feedback, given that no singular style of feedback has proven universally effective in all situations.

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Students utilizing the semester method may fail to achieve the anticipated outcomes if they do not receive adequate feedback in the classroom. Students have diverse preferences for feedback (Uddin, 2015). Therefore, educators are expected to investigate their students' feedback choices. This study aims to implement feedback in developmental assessment and to comprehend students' attitudes towards it. Delivering appropriate and timely feedback to students is essential for guiding their learning and assessing their impressions of the input. This study aims to examine the preferred feedback modalities of EFL undergraduate students at the selected university, determining whether they like a singular type of feedback or a combination of several forms, along with the underlying reasons for their preferences.

In Bangladesh, a significant number of students annually complete the HSC or A-level examination. Upon finishing their H.S.C or A level, students seek to enter in a university for advanced studies. In Bangladesh, over 50 private universities admit students from diverse academic backgrounds who lack proficiency in English, despite having studied the language for twelve years at the elementary, intermediate, and higher secondary levels. Private institutions utilize English as the exclusive medium of instruction. Students from Bangla medium encounter numerous challenges with feedback in their classrooms.

Feedback is an essential component of effective learning that aids students in understanding their courses and provides clear guidance on how to further their studies. Academic feedback is more closely and coherently linked to achievement than any other learning habit. To enhance students' comprehension and inspire them academically, educators must deliver appropriate feedback in the classroom and focus on its application. When teachers deliver feedback effectively, the learning environment becomes more engaging and influential for students. This study focuses on examining students' preference on teachers' feedback to enhance comprehension in the undergraduate EFL classroom. It seeks to identify a combination of useful and essential feedback in the classroom, enabling both teachers and students to achieve their skill development goals concurrently.

Literature Review

Over Exceeding Feedback is defined as a comment or information that learners receive regarding their progress in learning activities or assessments, provided by the instructor or another individual. Feedback is a crucial element for students and their educational development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) assert that feedback is a significant influence on learning and achievement, though its effect can be either positive or negative. Hattie (1999) acknowledged that appropriate feedback is infrequently observed in both academic and professional contexts (as reported in Voerman, 2014, p.11). The feedback process is utilized to foster effective engagement in educational environments. Narciss (2008) defines feedback in educational contexts as the post-response information that informs learners about their actual learning and performance states, aiding them in determining whether these states align with the learning objectives in a specific context.

Various forms of feedback are utilized in the classroom. Oral feedback is a kind of communication in which pupils receive responses from their teacher, who may either provide explicit or implicit corrections or prompt them to understand their statements. During discussions on oral feedback in class, any sort of interaction that provides information to enhance students' learning is also considered. Numerous researchers have shown that oral feedback is an effective instrument in second language acquisition classes (Lyster et al., 2013). Furthermore, Long's interaction hypothesis posits that the interactional approach accelerates second language acquisition (Mackey, 2006). Interaction links input, internal learning abilities, especially selective attention, and output in effective manners (Long 1996). Collective feedback occurs when the teacher consolidates common errors and addresses them in class to avoid identifying specific students; this can be regarded as a form of group-oriented oral feedback. For instance, while feedback may be provided individually, its efficacy is heightened when the entire class participates, allowing pupils to recognize one another's

errors. Contrary to oral feedback, which is prevalent in school settings and typically occurs frequently. Written feedback necessitates written evaluation and rectification in various contexts. A significant number of educators employ written remarks to provide exceptional evaluation on written assignments. This type of feedback is often not immediate, allowing educators time to contemplate how to deliver it and what actions to take. Stronge asserts that written feedback should have significantly more detail than merely indicating the appropriateness of responses (quoted in Basu, 2006). Page (2004) examined the effects of written feedback on student performance and determined that specific comments tailored to students' knowledge and task details were more beneficial than predetermined evaluations, which should be addressed through grade assignment (cited in Basu, 2006). Consequently, various approaches are employed in providing textual feedback to pupils. A teacher can provide criticism related to the topic, structure, grammar, and vocabulary of the writing (Weigle 2002).

Corrective feedback is considered a form of performance feedback used to enhance students' progress. Educators provide feedback to students to enhance opportunities and rectify problems during instruction. Research indicates that students desire and anticipate feedback regarding their errors in written assignments, and that such feedback significantly impacts their capacity to revise their work efficiently (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Suggestive feedback denotes a type of feedback in which the instructor recommends corrections for errors, hence preventing pupils from repeating mistakes in that specific domain in the future. Kepner (1991) asserts that it pertains to providing future direction for the advancement of teachers' work.

Most research highlights feedback that confirms an accurate response through positive reinforcement or corrects an erroneous response via corrective feedback. An educator must provide affirmative comments to inspire their students. Oral feedback that includes positive comments such as "well," "very good," "yes," and "good job" signifies an appropriate answer while also providing encouragement to the student and enhancing motivation for continued learning (Ellis, 2009). Several motivation theories indicate that positive feedback is more effective in motivating goal pursuit than negative feedback, since it enhances the potential outcomes of the goal and the predicted self-efficacy of the individual (Lickerman, 2013). Negative feedback signifies a shortcoming in a learner's performance. Negative feedback diminishes learners' confidence in their capacity to achieve their objectives and their expectations of success (Lickerman, 2013). Krashen (1981) contended that negative feedback is unnecessary and may possibly be harmful. Consequently, Krashen posits that any attempts to direct the learner's focus towards linguistic form should be disregarded, and L2 educators must endeavor to enhance the learner's demonstration of positive evidence.

Methodology

To investigate the feedback preferences of EFL students, this study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data for a thorough analysis. 55 undergraduate English majors (ages 18 to 22) from a chosen university participated; all had studied English for twelve years prior. While qualitative insights were obtained through one-on-one interviews (n=10) to thoroughly examine students' impressions, quantitative data was gathered using structured questionnaires (n=45) to find trends in feedback preferences. The interview participants were coded from P1 to P10. Because of the researcher's institutional affiliation, convenience sampling was employed, and data were analyzed both statistically (quantitatively) and thematically (qualitatively) to make sure both empirical and experienced viewpoints were taken into account. Strict adherence to ethical guidelines was maintained, which included getting informed consent, protecting participant identity, and permitting voluntary withdrawal at any time. The mix of approaches reduced bias while preserving methodological rigor, offering a balanced picture of feedback efficacy. In order to ensure accurate and nuanced conclusions on students' feedback expectations in EFL classrooms, the study's design gave equal weight to numerical trends and individual experiences.

Findings and Discussion

This study examined EFL students' feedback preferences, revealing three dominant themes: a strong preference for oral corrective feedback combinations, the motivational role of positive feedback, and the contextual utility of written feedback.

Oral Feedback: Immediacy and Interaction

Quantitative data showed 62% of students preferred oral feedback, particularly when paired with corrective remarks ("It helps me fix mistakes right away"). Interviews clarified this preference: students valued the real-time interaction it facilitated, echoing Lyster et al.'s (2013) findings on oral feedback's role in SLA classrooms. However, some interviewees noted that poor delivery (e.g., tone) could undermine its efficacy, a nuance surveys alone could not capture.

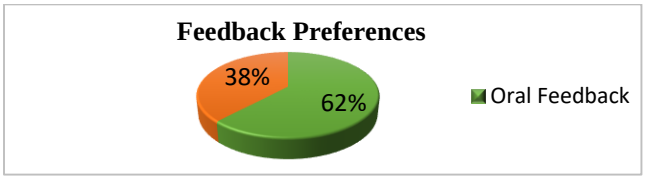


Figure 1. Preferred forms of feedback

Corrective Feedback: Precision and Learning

Both methods highlighted corrective feedback's importance. Surveys revealed 74% of students favored it when combined with oral/written forms, while interviews emphasized its role in error awareness as P5 mention "I need to know exactly where I went wrong. This aligns with Ferris and Roberts (2001) but extends their work by showing students prioritize combinations (e.g., oral explanations with written corrections) over isolated types.

Positive Feedback: Motivation and Confidence

Quantitatively, 92% preferred positive feedback (e.g., praise, encouragement), citing its motivational impact. Thematic analysis of interviews revealed this was especially critical for lower-proficiency students, suggesting a link to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). Notably, no interviewees endorsed negative feedback, supporting its near-total exclusion in survey responses.

Written Feedback: Practical Constraints

While 68% valued written feedback (e.g., detailed comments, marginal notes), interviews exposed contextual limitations: teachers' time constraints often led to inconsistent or vague comments as P8 remarks, "Sometimes it's just 'good job' with no details". This mirrors Hyland and Hyland's (2006) observation that written feedback's quality depends on instructors' workload.

Synthesis and Implications

The mixed-methods approach revealed complementary insights. Quantitative data identified prevalence trends (e.g., 92% positive feedback preference). Interviews explained why preferences existed (e.g., oral feedback's immediacy, positive feedback's emotional impact). The practical implications hint that EFL instructors should combine feedback types (e.g., oral corrections with written summaries). They should also be trained in feedback delivery (e.g., tone for oral feedback, specificity for written comments).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher made some recommendations in this section. To augment EFL feedback practices, teachers should combine oral and corrective feedback for clarity while integrating positive reinforcement to maintain students' motivation. Given varying student needs and proficiency levels, instructors must adapt their approaches rather than relying on uniform methods.

Institutions should address workload constraints that compromise written feedback quality, creating space for more meaningful teacher-student interactions. Students benefit from actively engaging with feedback processes by clearly communicating their preferences to instructors. Professional development should focus on techniques of delivery, including tone and specificity, to ensure feedback is both pedagogically effective and emotionally supportive. Teachers should be encouraged to balance error correction with encouragement, particularly for learners struggling with confidence, while fostering interactive environments where students can articulate their needs. Ultimately, effective feedback requires responsiveness to individual differences and institutional support to implement these tailored approaches successfully.

Conclusion

This qualitative study identifies feedback preference of English major undergraduate students of a private university in Bangladesh, and the findings indicated that the students, as EFL learners, when receiving feedback, were likely to experience variations in several aspects. The study also reveals EFL students strongly prefer oral-corrective and positive feedback, highlighting the need for tailored, multimodal approaches. Findings stress the importance of balancing error correction with motivational support, while acknowledging practical constraints like teacher workload. Aligning feedback methods with these evidence-based preferences can optimize learning outcomes, though further research is needed to assess long-term impacts across diverse contexts. The convenience sampling and single-institution data limit generalizability of the study. Future studies could expand demographics and measure learning outcomes linked to feedback types.

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